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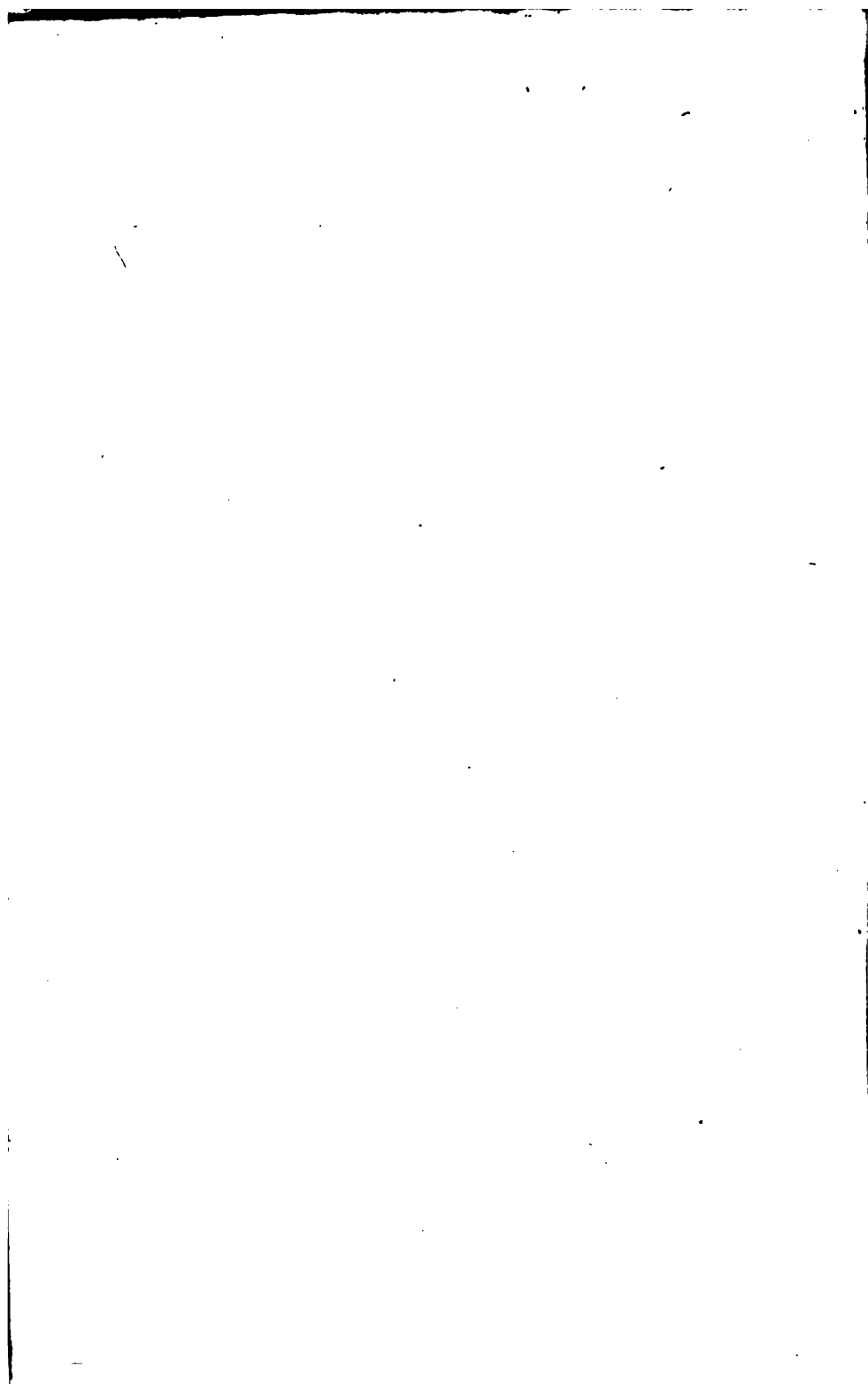
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35.

710.





T R A G E D I E S

BY

H. ST. G. TUCKER, Esq.

THE
T R A G E D I E S

OF

H A R O L D,

AND

C A M O E N S.



BY

H. ST. G. TUCKER, Esq.

LONDON:
PARBURY, ALLEN, & CO.,
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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I WILL not apologise for offering the Tragedies of “ HAROLD ” and “ CAMOENS ” to the public.

These plays were written and printed many years ago. They were composed in the hours of relaxation from the labours of office ; and their circulation was confined within the narrow circle of my family and friends. They have since been revised, in the hope that I might succeed in rendering them worthy of public favour.

The object of the Drama is to exhibit the passions, the feelings, and the weakness of our nature—to expose to view those peculiarities, or elements, which constitute individual character ; and in the course of this delineation, to instruct and amuse ; to instil noble and generous sentiments ; to inculcate loyalty and patriotism ; and,

in fine, to render vice odious and virtue attractive. This object I have kept steadily in view, and when, in so many instances, grave and excellent men have not thought it unbecoming in them to engage in the service of the Drama, I cannot think that, in following, at an humble distance, their example, I shall compromise the character of a public servant, whose time and labour are still pledged to the discharge of a public duty.

The tragedy of "Harold" is intended to inculcate the virtue of patriotism, and it was written when the armies of France threatened our shores. Those armies were dispersed by the genius and valour of our illustrious countryman to whom the play is dedicated ; but devotion to our King and Country are scarcely less called for at the present moment, when that noble fabric, heretofore the pride and boast of England, and long the admiration of surrounding nations, has been shaken to its very foundations.

The master mind, pre-eminent alike in council and in the camp, is still fortunately among us ; and the warrior, to whom England owes so much of her glory, and Europe her independence, will

be foremost to defend the throne, the altar, and the cherished institutions of our country.

“ Camoens” has been composed in a different style, and the language, the incidents, and characters, approach nearer to the standard of real life.

I have attempted this style, because the Tragedies which delineate the scenes, the manners, and feelings with which we are most familiar, are usually more interesting than those which assume a loftier tone, and describe events, striking but rare, in which heroes and princes are the actors.

This Play is addressed more particularly to that sex, whom Nature has formed gentle, benevolent, and humane ; and whose errors, when they deviate from their natural course, are generally produced by external influences, or the intensity of passion.

The simple moral of my Drama has been, to trace out and expose the tendency of that excess of feeling, that intemperance of passion, which so often leads to the most fatal results. Against the open approaches of vice we are more on our guard; but we are not always on our guard against im-

pulses, which are dangerous only when they are allowed an uncontrolled ascendancy. And in proposing to guard against itself that fairest portion of creation, which is most exposed to danger from its own generous feelings, I satisfy myself that I have pursued one of the legitimate objects of the Drama.

THE AUTHOR.

H A R O L D,

A Tragedy.

BY

H. ST. G. TUCKER, Esq.

TO
HIS GRACE
ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON,
THE WARRIOR
WHO NEVER LOST A BATTLE;
THE STATESMAN
WHOSE WISDOM SECURED WHAT HIS VALOR WON;

This Drama

IS

DEDICATED,

WITH A FEELING OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT,

BY HIS

FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HAROLD	King of England.
TOSTI	} His brothers.
GURTH	
LEOFRINE	
MORCAR	Earl of Northumberland.
EDWIN	His brother, Earl of Mercia.
WALTHEOFF	} English Lords.
HEREWALD.....	
COXO	
EDNOTH	
EDRIC	Surnamed the Forrester.
SIGAND	Archbishop of Canterbury.
EDGAR ATHELING...	Lineal Heir to the Throne.
MONK.	
TAILLIFER	a Norman Knight.
D'ARCY	a Norman Lord.
Norman Lords, Soldiers, Herald, &c.	

WOMEN.

ELFRIDA.....	Wife of Tosti, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders.
MARGARET.....	} Sisters of Edgar Atheling.
EMMA	

H A R O L D.



A C T I.



SCENE I.

ELFRIDA AND EMMA.

EMMA. Rejoice, Elfrida!—Hail the radiant morn,
Whose breath hath chased away those angry clouds
Which late o'er England cast a fearful gloom.
Great Harold comes: our god-like chief returns.
Triumphant o'er the fierce Norwegian host.
His mighty arm hath driven the ruthless foe
Far from our shore, no more to desolate the land.
Thy lord, too, comes Elfrida:
Warlike Tosti comes, to greet thy wedded love.

ELFRIDA. And comes not Edwin, too?
Have deeds of equal daring failed to grace
The valiant Edwin's crest? Hath Mercia's Earl
Been backward in the close embattled field?
Hast thou not heard, when royal Harold, pressed
By numerous bands, maintained the doubtful fight,

How gallant Edwin, fired with generous rage,
 Bore down the opposing ranks?
 Hast thou not heard, how daring Harfager
 First bowed before thy youthful hero's sword;
 While proud Olaus, captive led,
 Confessed the force of Harold's conquering arm?
 Is Emma not elate, that Mercia thus
 Brave competition holds with England's prince?

EMMA. Brave Mercia's fame is England's pride;
 But Emma holds no dearer interest.
 An adverse destiny hath frowned upon us,
 And Edwin never can be mine.

ELFRIDA. Wherefore these fears?
 Tho' brave and noble, rich in generous blood,
 A haughty ancestry thy Edwin boast,
 Yet shall proud Mercia's Earl thy race contemn,
 Thy nobler race, from holy Edward sprung,
 Which long, with prosperous event, maintained
 O'er this wide realm their just and rightful sway?
 Is Mercia's Earl perfidious grown?
 Will Edwin dare to slight thy plighted faith?

EMMA. Not so, Elfrida—Do him not this wrong.
 Mercia can ne'er desert the path of honour.—
 Hast thou forgot, Elfrida, that thy Lord,
 Stern Tosti, governs still our wayward fate?
 That, guardian of my unprotected youth,
 His will must fix my future choice!
 Hast thou forgot, what deadly feuds prevail

Between thy Lord and Mercia's warlike house ?
How, when the bold Northumbrian vassals dared,
By too severe a yoke long sorely galled,
Throw off allegiance, erst to Tosti due,
How royal Harold then, austere just,
Tore the proud honours from thy Tosti's brow,
And the rich Earldom gave to fiery Morcar !
Canst thou believe, that this rude injury
Tosti can e'er forgive ; or e'er forget,
That Edwin is this Morcar's brother ?

ELFRIDA. Yes, Emma.—Long the fatal strife
Hath slept in sweet forgetfulness.—
Was Morcar guilty, that his Sovereign's love,
And the loud voice of a bold clamorous people,
Adjudged the forfeit honours to his house ?
Or Edwin guilty in a brother's name ?
Discard these fears.—Our martial chiefs,
Alike by noble emulation fired,
Together sought of late the tented field,
Together conquered, and each baser thought
Drowned in their country's love.

Enter EDWIN to them.

EDWIN. My peerless Emma !—Heaven hath heard our prayer,
And Heaven itself, in that celestial form,
Bids me contemplate its own Paradise.
Gracious Elfrida, much to thee I owe
Of dutious homage ; but my forward love,

A bolder suppliant, would yet o'erstep the bounds,
Where just respect for thy high excellence
Should check my free presuming.

(Kisses her hand.)

ELFRIDA. Welcome, brave Edwin.—With joy we hail
Thy safe return ; and this same blushing maid
Would bid thee dearer welcome, if, for once,
The lips might tell the heart's true secret.

EMMA. Spare me, Elfrida !
While I, in simple modesty, avow,
That in Lord Edwin's presence here,
My every wish is gratified.

EDWIN. Angelic Emma !

ELFRIDA. But come, Lord Edwin, tell of Stamford's field ;
For much we crave to know each mighty deed
And circumstance, which marked that glorious day.
Then speak, and to this welcome theme
We shall address our readiest hearing.

EDWIN. Far rather would I hear the flattering voice,
Which bids me hope that, in my Emma's love
And fair Elfrida's friendship, still
I hold a cherished place.

ELFRIDA. Thou wilt not, sure, aver,
That Friendship's soothing voice can calm
Those ardent spirits which the clarion roused ;
That love can charm the sense perverse,
To which the din of arms speaks goodly music.
Then why did Edwin seek the distant camp?

When manhood's dye scarce ting'd the glowing cheek,
And youth gave pretext for those gentler sports
Which smiling peace in happier climes invites ?
Wherefore did Edwin fly his Emma's presence,
And gain the foremost ranks of battle ?
Then say not that the warrior's soul can draw
Fit aliment from woman's light discourse ;
What boots it, that the laurell'd chief be told,
How speeds the loom,—who tends the distaff ;
Or what new trifles grow beneath the hand
Which ne'er has grasped the glittering falchion.
Tell us of war,—of perilous adventure,—
Of fell encounters on th' ensanguined field,—
Of glorious shouts of victory ;
And all the pomp and after circumstance,
Which to the youthful hero's fancy paint
Grim War, and Death itself, in robe of bridal ornament.

EDWIN. Well may the veteran hold discourse
Of war and victory's achievement ;
But I, a novice and unknown to fame,
Whose page records the feats of chivalry,
A stranger yet to arms, traced not the path
Where the best trophies of the fight were won,
Where Edric fought, and Waltheoff stained the plain
With blood of countless enemies ;
And dauntless Herewald, and Valor's sons,
Pressed foremost, to achieve those deeds,
Which well might grace the speech of him

Who nobly dared them.

But if, perchance, the battle sought our rank,

And all around its fearful havoc spread,

Love hovered o'er my crest, and its light wing

Wafted aside the hissing arrow's flight :

Love urg'd my sword, and my unpractised arm

Impelled with fury on the foe.

Thou sayest, Elfrida, when the trumpet's sound

Our country's warriors summoned to the field,

The garb of youth had shewn my loitering here

Free from reproach.

What, could a loyal youth inactive pause,

While the invader's hostile armament

Threatened to waste the fruit of patient toil ?

When blood-stained banners waved in bold defiance,

When the foul spoiler's rage had dared invade

The sacred haunts of virgin purity,

Could Edwin pause ?

S'death ! Had the spotless Emma's shriek

Then pierced his maddened sense !

Accursed the dastard, he whose recreant soul

Had shunned the dangers of the well-fought field :

Accursed the slave, who dead to shame,

Shall live to see his country's state o'erthrown,

Its sacred altars pillaged and profaned,

His king insulted, and the land enslaved,

And all that honour, all that love holds dear,

Buried in fearful ruin !

ELFRIDA. Brave words, Lord Edwin ; and thy early dawn
Gives happy promise of a glorious day.
But come: The sword is sheathed, and hateful War
Hath hid its frightful visage.
Peace sheds her fragrant blossoms, which invite
To Love's chaste pleasures and to soft repose !
And thy own Emma here would fain apart,
In secret converse, tell her heart's o'erflowing,
And with her smiles revive thy jaded spirits.

[*Eæunt.*

SCENE II.

HAROLD, TOSTI, GUETH, LEOFRINE, SIGAND, WALTHEOFF,
EDRIC, MORCAR, and *Attendants.*

HAROLD. This air breathes light, and its fresh savour lends
A healthful vigour to our native spirits.
Our chafing helmets doffed, the cumbrous garb of war,
With its fair trophies won, shall deck the festive hall.
Nobly our warriors here the course have run
Of venturous chivalry, and Fame's bright vault
Shall tell the proud exploits of England's chiefs.
Thou, gallant Waltheoff, hast approved
Thy high descent ; nor thy illustrious sire,
The loyal Siward, raised his country's hope
To prouder height, when, prompt at honour's call,
His wrathful sword beat down the blood-stained crest
Of fell Macbeth, and gave her banished chief

To Scotland's wishes.

Undaunted Edric, too, hath well affirmed
His just pretension to his sovereign's love ;
And if thy 'scutchen bore some stain of former times,
Thou hast effaced the blot, and nobly graced it
With a purer lustre.

EDRIC. My liege, tho' I, no stranger to the toils
Of glorious war, yet my untutored speech,
Rough and unskilled, shall poorly serve to gloss
The tale, which gossip Slander dared invent
To blast the honours of my house.
But let the proudest knight that e'er bore off
The palm in gallant tournament ;
Let Mars himself, closed in the listed field,
Impeach the name I hold in dear respect,
My sword shall furnish theme and argument,
To prove my true allegiance.

HAROLD. Well hast thou said ; and 'tis our purpose still
To give thee firm assurance of our faith.
Morcar, thy towering flight hath reached
That lofty eminence, that our applause,
With its best wing pursuing,
Shall seem a very sluggard.
Where is young Edwin, too ? We miss the youth ;
And this, his absence, robs his fame
Of that rich tribute which his valour won.

MORCAR. My liege, he sped before us.
I saw his angry courser spurn the ground,

While his hot reeking flanks betrayed
His lord's impatience.

TOSTI. Morcar, if thou wouldst counsel take of wisdom,
Thy care should check young Edwin's giddy course ;
For he, with rash and inconsiderate heat,
Hath urged a wanton chase, o'erleaping those set bounds,
Where I, in virtue of the trust I bear,
Must stop his bold intrusion.

MORCAR. Lord Tosti, Mercia wants not my officious prompting.
His good discretion best shall serve to guide
His fair proceeding.

TOSTI. Lord Morcar, if thy prudence fail
To place some check upon his wild career,
My hand provoked, shall stay his hot pursuit,
And teach the stripling youth forbearance.

MORCAR. Prince, if thou dare offend his better worth,
My sword—

(Placing his hand on his sword.)

HAROLD. Morcar, forbear ; and let not discord here
Deform the feature of this noble presence.
Leofrine, bestow the prisoners :
Thy youth best fits thee for the charge,
Which shall demand a courteous bearing.
Time, which matures our martial virtues,
Soon steals away that softer quality,
Which gives a grace and charm to youth.
Let great Olaus in our court command
A just respect ; and for conveyance hence,

Let twenty barks, of those his adverse fortune lost,
Receive our best equipment.

[*Exit* LEOFRINE.]

TOSTI. My liege, those lofty barks might better serve
To guard our coast against his barbarous horde,
Whom we too oft have seen, gorged with our spoil,
Insult and trample down our people.

HAROLD. Lord Tosti, never may we safety purchase
At price of our dear honour.
Nor must we lightly hold, that great Olaus,
His princely word forgot, can basely stoop
To brand his mighty name
With stain of foul ingratitude.
The vanquished still command our just regard,
And our best cares could store no richer harvest
Than the Norwegian's friendship.

My Lord Archbishop, (To SIGAND)
We thank thee for those cares, which, in our absence,
Successfully maintained our state and laws :
And these, our martial labours ended,
And our brave warriors from their charge dismissed
To seek repose and glad their distant homes,
It is our settled purpose to bestow
That fostering care, which, with thy needful aid,
Shall give to peace its richest ornament.

SIGAND. Most potent Harold, well it shall become
Thy pious care, to heal the rankling wound
Which war hath deep inflicted,

The realm distempered wears a sickly hue,
And crime unchecked, disorder lawless grown,
Shall need thy strong correction.
Our sacred ministry its awful power shall lend,
To stay the mad career of bold impiety ;
For man, by nature weak and passion's slave,
Needs the strong curb of wholesome discipline.

HAROLD. Most holy Sigand, auspicious heaven our labours
favouring,

Those morals ill which now the state deform,
We purpose to correct, strong in our people's love.
The bounteous earth, soothed by our rustic cares,
Shall yield its treasures to industrious toil.
To guard by equal law the subject's rights,
And shield the weak from the oppressor's power ;
To guide with temperate hand the sword of justice,
And watch with anxious heed the general weal,
Shall be the sacred end and aim
At which our labours point :
Whilst thou, most holy Sigand, shall dispose
Our generous youth to trace fair virtue's path,
And guide th'aspiring soul through this its transient state
To life immortal.

SIGAND. These cares, great Prince, shall well become
Thy dignity and office, and our approving voice
Shall crave a blessing on the work.

Enter HEREWALD.

HAROLD. Whence sped, Lord Herewald? Thy eager looks
Would speak some tidings of great import.

HEREWALD. My liege, the Bastard William, with a mighty
power,

Insults our coast, and near where Pevensey
Its lofty turret rears, his numerous standards brave
Thy sovereign rule, while loud for vengeance call
Our suffering people.

HAROLD. What opposition met he? where kept our fleets their
guard?

HEREWALD. 'Tis given, my liege, that, e'er the Norman dared
Embark his host, a furious storm arising,
Scattered our bravest ships. While some, impelled
By the resistless gale, sought distant ports,
For present safety or much needed aid,
Others submerged accuse th' unsparing deep;
And our own element, in evil hour,
By this disastrous chance set free,
Fair passage gave to Norman William.

HAROLD. What may his numbers reach?

HEREWALD. Report says, sixty thousand strong,
The pride and strength of all that wide domain,
Which bore the sway of mighty Charlemagne.
The flower of chivalry from realms remote
Hath sought the Norman banner, eager bent
To break the lance with prime of English valour.
With these a base and mercenary crew

Infest the camp, a desperate band, intent on spoil,
Unawed by aught which man most sacred holds,
Pursuing war to glut their monstrous craving
With blood and rapine.

HAROLD. This comes unsuitable, but we shall give it heed.

If that the fates have willed that we, once more,
Our crown, our righteous cause, our country's honour,
Our people's safety, must defend in arms,
Bellona, I embrace thee !
Prince Tosti, and thou, Lord Waltheoff, we charge
To hasten needful preparation.
Of thee, Lord Herewald, some further question held,
We shall with these, the pillars of our state,
Deliberate counsel take, how best our means
May be applied to meet the time's emergence.

[*Exeunt* HAROLD and *suite*.]

Manent TOSTI and WALTHEOFF.

TOSTI. My lord, when we did wipe our swords,
It was, methinks, a labour most superfluous ;
These giddy wars shall teach us better thrift.

WALTHEOFF. The Norman is uncourteous,
And this, his forward visit, for some short hour
We could have spared ; but 'tis the soldier's part
To front whate'er befall, and his good sword to wear
Obedient to the occasion.

TOSTI. The King did give thee cheering words, my lord,
And ne'er forgot thy noble lineage.

WALTHEROFF. His Majesty more gracious praise bestowed
Than my poor worth aspired to.

TOSTI. And yet, 'twere fit, methinks, that he,
Whom now we greet as loyal Siward's issue,
Were warranted the loyal Siward's heir.
Northumbria's honours well might grace the brow
Of him, whose sire so long had proudly worn them.

WALTHEROFF. That I should proudly rate those honours
Which my illustrious sire once proudly wore,
I ne'er deny ; but, that I can behold
Northumbria's earldom grace a braver crest
With no malignant eye, is yet most true ;
Nor have my eager wishes yet outrun
My sovereign's favour.

TOSTI. The Norman is reputed valiant,
Most skilled in all which may become a soldier,
Of gracious bearing, and right nobly bred ;
And ever wont with bounteous hand to grace
A service of great eminence.

WALTHEROFF. The Norman's virtues might, my lord,
At this rude hour, by us be well dispensed with :
Nor am I tempted to admire the quality,
Which now array'd in hostile guise,
Threatens our country's safety.

TOSTI. Lord Waltheroff, if that Northumbria's earldom
Ought might tempt——

WALTHEROFF. Lord Tosti, if thy speech may semblance bear
Of serious import, thou dost offend my honour.

If that, in sportful mood, thou wouldst essay
My truth and fealty, then I tell thee, prince,
Thy wisdom ne'er could choose a theme
More harsh, more wanton, and unsuitable.
Nor rich Northumbria's earldom, nor the land
Of Israel's hope, could win me from the course
Of true respected honour.

TOSTI. My lord, I ever did esteem thy sterling worth ;
Yet now my admiration swells to loftier note.
The time is big with peril to our house,
And when dark clouds impend, the truth of friends,
Too roughly tried, may bear some question.
'Tis then most fit we shake the labouring branch,
And stripping off the fruit of sickly growth,
Preserve its vital strength, to nourish forth
Blossoms of higher promise.
My lord, some hasty moments given to lighter cares,
I shall attend lord Waltheoff's leisure,
That we may ponder well those high commands
Which late his Majesty hath put upon us.

[*Exit* WALTHEOFF.]

TOSTI *solus*.

TOSTI. Fool ! fool ! base and degenerate slave !
No more allied in blood to lordly Siward,
Than the meek dove to Jove's imperial bird !
I tore the earldom from thy tottering house.
From *me*, with ruder force, 'twas rashly torn :

But this foul wrong I hold in rooted memory,
And it shall render back a dear account.
This Edric, too, a most preposterous knave,
Must needs put on the stamp of honesty.
His sire, a false, disloyal traitor,
Oft trusted, still foresworn, and faithless found.
May we believe that the rank thistle e'er
Produced the rose ? No matter——
'Tis deeply laid, and these tame hinds
Our great design would palsy.
But, if the wily Norman play me false !
He shall not dare ! I have impressed him,
That this, our loyal people (confound the slaves),
May ne'er be taught to bear a foreign yoke.
That gentle Edgar (alack ! the drivelling dolt !),
As holy Edward's heir, lives in their dear affections :
That we, vicegerent here, shall rule the realm,
In all effect subservient to his will,
And with rich tribute gorge his Norman coffers.
But, mark ! The faith we swear, by our great need in-
forced,
Shall wing its flight, when favouring time shall serve
To break the hateful bonds.
In dreams successive I have seen the crown
Suspended o'er this brow.
A cunning seer, who reads the book of fate,
Foretold that I, a youth of no expectancy,
Should trample on the royal diadem.

But if I tear it from another's brow,
What hinders that I wear the precious spoil?
And, should ambition's glorious aim miscarry,
Revenge shall spread her richest harvest.
A mighty fabric shaken to the ground
Shall mark the great attempt.
Let ruin come,—the brave ne'er fall alone
He bravely falls, who falling grasps a throne.

[*Exit.*

A C T II.

SCENE I.

Enter TOSTI and ELFRIDA.

TOSTI. I will not hear thee.

ELFRIDA. Thou must, dear Prince ; I may not be denied.

For once, let this, my earnest suit, prevail :

Mercia with ardour loves our gentle Emma,

And she consenting meets his passion.

We ever have esteemed the maid our own,

And she with filial love repays our care.

This fortunate alliance, then, shall smooth

That rugged space, which placeth Mercia's house

Far from my Tosti's love.

Then let thy sanction crown their ardent wishes.

Thou must, dear Tosti, taste the sweet delight

Of making others happy.

TOSTI. Unthinking woman ! who would a dagger lend

To stab thy proper offspring.

Art thou to learn, that the unchecked caprice

Of this, our giddy people, long has marked

The sainted Edward's issue for the throne ?

Art thou to learn, that Mercia's haughty race,

No equal owned, would scan that lofty height
Where thy own offspring stand pre-eminent ?
That Edwin's love at wild Ambition's torch
First kindled into flame ? If thy dull sense
Can ne'er combine these objects palpable,
Let silence shew thy wisdom.

ELFRIDA. It may not be. If Edwin's flame
From mad Ambition drew its present ardour,
Why did not Morcar's fiery nature blaze
In sensible combustion ? Morcar,
Whose birth to vaulting hope gave freer license.
Can generous Edwin, every tie forgot
Of friendship, honour, from himself estranged,
Prostrate his virtue at Ambition's idol ?

TOSTI. Poor reasoner ! Thou little knowest
How dire Ambition's flame, incessant raging,
Consumes the heart on which the spark descends ;
Nor trace of honour, love, or friendship leaves,
To mark where once they flourished.

ELFRIDA. It cannot be. The heart, wherein
True honour fixes its strong citadel,
May ne'er to bold Ambition's phrenzy yield
A dangerous admission. Edwin his generous soul
Shall ne'er devote to this most fatal passion.
Then say, dear lord, I bear thy privilege
To give these lovers' hopes safer assurance.

TOSTI. Forbear ! Nor let this jarring theme again
Offend my ear. Instruct thy ward

To banish from her heart this idle fancy,
 This phantom of the brain, this gaudy puppet,
 Which infant folly no sooner decks in mimic shew,
 Than light caprice, or fretful peevishness,
 Destroys the mock creation.
 For Emma we have other views ;
 And thy best skill shall teach the maid
 To give obedience to our will.

[*Exit* TOSTI.

ELFRIDA *sola*.

ELFRIDA. 'Tis strange ! What means this stern rebuke ?
 This harsh denial of so just a suit ?
 This sudden humour must perforce inflame
 That hateful strife, which long has raged
 Between our rival houses.
 It cannot be !—and yet I've seen him look
 As though the very soul would issue from the eye.
 Ha ! spurn the noble Baldwin's daughter !
 Insult the faithful partner of his bed !
 Dishonour his own offspring !
 Down, down, uneasy thoughts !
 This traitor tear is not Elfrida's :
 It would arraign her noble birth.
 'Tis gone ! I breathe again !
 Hence, hence ; and let no weakness tell
 The inward grief, which would impeach a name
 Elfrida swore to honour.

[*Exit*.

SCENE II.

Garden of Tosti's Palace.—Enter EDWIN and EMMA.

EDWIN. Consent, my Emma ! the spring puts forth its blossoms,

The air distils its sweetest perfume,
The birds in blythesome notes discourse of love,—
And every creature owns the genial warmth
Which glows within us.

All nature smiles around, and whispers soft,
That youth should ne'er delay the proffer'd bliss.
Soon, soon, the leaf shall fall,
And chilling winter calm our ardent spirits.
Consent, my Emma ! let that heavenly voice
Speak rapture to my soul.

EMMA. Ah ! talk not now of love and love's delights,—
Those flattering sounds find no sweet note responsive,
Since war again its dreadful trumpet sounds,
Freezing the vital current of my heart.
I love thy glory, Edwin ; but, ah ! how dearly purchased !

EDWIN. Fear not, my Emma : Heaven will still protect
Thy blameless innocence, nor wound
That gentle spirit by Edwin's fall.
Then, e'er I leave thee, let those sacred rites,
Which Heaven itself ordains, assure thee ever mine.

EMMA. Then thou art fixed to go !

EDWIN. What wouldst thou, Emma ?

EMMA. What would thy Emma?

Alas! she dares not think——

That which her heart desires, her heart disowns.

But far from Mercia's border

The hated Norman rears his standard.

EDWIN. It is not Mercia; 'tis England calls

Thy Edwin to the field.

Shall he desert his King, his Country's banner?

Bid him for Emma's sake meet instant death,

And aught but honour yield at her command,

And he would glory in the sacrifice.

To court dishonour were to poison love,

And tear the idol from his Emma's breast.

Those arms, fair emblem still of purity,

Could ne'er receive the youth condemned to shame,

The soldier's keen reproach, his country's scorn.

No! rather let the Norman javelin strike,

Than forfeit honour—forfeit Emma's love!

EMMA. Alas! thy words distract me.——

Of Heaven one only boon my heart implores;

Or Emma's death, or Edwin's safety.

EDWIN. Angelic Emma! let this kiss confess

The warm emotions of my soul.

Another, yet another, e'er we part.

EMMA. Cease, Edwin, cease! forbear!

Thy passion but embitters those afflictions,

Which my foreboding heart, at this sad hour,

Tells me 'tis doomed to suffer.

Ah! if stern Tosti frown upon our purpose

EDWIN. He will not, Emma. What should move
His captious humour to such harsh proceeding?
EMMA. I dread his gloomy temper. Well thou knowest
What rooted hate he bears thee.
EDWIN. For thy sake I will soothe his angry spirit.
Come, Emma, come!
A reverend Father waits at hand,
'To give our vows a holy sanction.

Enter TOSTI.

TOSTI. Lord Edwin, thy presence here,
As little welcome as expected,
Doth savour of intrusion.
EDWIN. My lord, thy speech uncourteous, well might check
My present hopes, were I, in careless mood, pursuing
An object light and frivolous.
I come, my lord, to claim this virtuous maid,
To whom I long have been affianced;
And in this wished-for union I would quench
That hostile flame, which long hath raged between us.
Assured of this, the dear and matchless gem
At which my heart aspires, with lighter spirits
I shall go forth to fight my Sovereign's battle.
TOSTI. If that the King with this rich prize must win
Your lordship's service, methinks 'tis highly rated.
Thy proffered friendship, too, but poorly suits
The temper of the occasion

EDWIN. Lord Tosti, my soul can little brook

This taunting humour.

EMMA. Peace, Edwin ! Dear, my lord, let me entreat

Some instance of that gracious favour,

Which thy most partial friendship oft has shewn ;

Which I, in grateful memory have cherished.

TOSTI. Emma, no more ! Thy suit we ne'er can grant.

Discard this forward youth, whose presence here

Doth much offend against thy modesty.

EDWIN. Who dares insult me thus ?

(Puts his hand on his sword.)

EMMA. Edwin, forbear !

My lord, thou knowest that to this gallant youth

My truth hath long been pledged :

Nor will those vows, to Heaven itself addressed,

By aught which Fate can worst inflict,

By me be e'er foresworn. Let me entreat,

That this, our plighted faith,

May now receive its happy confirmation :

TOSTI. Rash maid, those idle vows, unsanctioned,

Our lightest breath shall scatter.

If our accustomed love hath missed its aim,

A harsher tone shall quick command obedience.

Lord Edwin, thy presence here doth much offend ;

And if thy headlong will should e'er again

Break down that barrier which our prudence guards,

Th' uplifted rod shall teach thy youth

Safer discretion.

EDWIN. Audacious Tosti ! But that an Angel here
My hand restrains, this sword, with apt response
Should answer thy proud threat,
And curb thy haughty insolence.
But vengeance, now delayed, with surer aim
Shall strike, and deadlier fury.

[*Exit* EDWIN.]

EMMA. Stay, Edwin, stay !
My lord, repair this hasty injury,
Or sudden ruin follows.

TOSTI. Ha ! the fretful boy ! I mock his passion impotent.
Most beauteous Emma, if my speech severe
Hath aught alarmed thy gentle spirit,
Thou must forgive the jealous rage
Which may not bear a rival.

EMMA. My lord, this strain unused, doth much impeach
Lord Tosti's wisdom : nor may I safely hear
What deeply wounds my honour.

TOSTI. Cast off those idle fetters of the brain.
Forget the boyish Edwin ;
A higher destiny awaits thee.
His fickle youth would rove to other flowers,
And leave thee soon neglected.
'Tis manhood's praise to bear a constant temper :
Its taste, nor lightly moved, nor prone to change.
Then let thy Tosti claim that dear regard,
Which thy misguided fancy would bestow
On faithless Edwin.

EMMA. Unworthy Prince ! my soul abhors the thought :

Oh, Edwin ! who dares impeach thy faith ?

Elfrida ! much wronged Elfrida !

TOSTI. Let not Elfrida give thy thought alarm.

For reasons potent, which affect the state,

To Baldwin's court 'tis fixed that she return,

Those ties dissolved which once united us,

And thou alone shall henceforth reign supreme ;

Nor shall this land display of female loftiness

My Emma's equal. The noblest dames

Shall envy her we grace as Emma's handmaid.

EMMA. My soul detests thy guilty purpose,

And loathes the object which could harbour thoughts

So dark, so hateful.

TOSTI. Ha ! perverse and froward still !

If thy obdurate heart may ne'er be moved

By soothing speech and gentle blandishments,

A ruder force shall bend thee to our will.

Within the hour prepare for thy departure hence.

EMMA. What wouldst thou ?

Where, where is Emma doomed to perish ?

TOSTI. It boots thee not to know.

Be prompt, and yield obedience ;

Or, by yon radiant light, I swear,

That e'er again the orb resplendent trace

Its circling course through the ætherial space,

That puppet, which thy sickly fancy worships,

For ever banished thy deluded sight,

Shall curse the chance which moved thy fond caprice,
And hurled to swift destruction,
Perish.——

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III.

Enter MORCAR and EDWIN.

EDWIN. The insult calls for instant vengeance.

MORCAR. Thy just resentment shall have freest scope

When time and circumstance more aptly suit.

EDWIN. Shall I cold parley hold with time and circumstance,

When wounded honour prompts my just revenge?

MORCAR. 'Tis honour bids thee curb thy present rage.

When England's peril claims thy vassal sword,

It is not free to scourge a private wrong:

Nor does that course which nicest honour dictates,

Forbid that we some moments' pause bestow,

To hold discourse with reason.

EDWIN. Th' affront was loud, and may not brook delay.

The injured Emma, too! If my fair speech

Hath failed to gain the end, which I so long

By fairest means have still pursued,

A bolder force shall be applied.

MORCAR. By force thou canst not gain the maid.

EDWIN. Who shall stay me? Who gave this Tosti power

To rule her future destiny?

What tie of blood hath made great Edward's issue
The ward of Godwin's House?

MORCAR. The King hath given him power.
Guardian of Emma's fortunes,
He may command her future choice,
And give the maid to some more favoured chief.

EDWIN. S'death! It may not be!
When hostile myriads shake the tottering throne,
Earl Godwin's race shall never dare provoke
My quick resentment.

MORCAR. Ha! What means this bold rebellious threat?
Would favoured Mercia barter truth
And firm allegiance for a woman's hand?
Must thy invaded country stoop to purchase
Lord Edwin's service with a maiden's favour?

EDWIN. The mind is free—the heart no guardian knows,
And owns no law by human fraud imposed—
Command that its quick pulse should instant cease,
That the rich stream should sudden cease to flow,
We may not reach the heaven-directed spring—
Then why should Emma wear those galling chains,
Which nature ne'er designed the heart should know,
Which all, the meanest of the race, would spurn?

MORCAR. What powers our nation's policy hath placed
In those who bear its high commission
To guard our youth, I shall not here discourse—
But 'tis the noble patriot's part
To obey his country's law.—

If that thou art content to trace the course
Which temperate wisdom and thy loyal truth
Alike command, I pledge a brother's word,
That these thy wrongs shall find their just arbitriments,
And Emma's hand reward thy constant love;
Or Harold's rage from Morcar's sword shall take
A proud defiance.—

But if thou wilt to ill-timed passion give
A wide and heedless sway, and still forget
The obedience due to honour's sacred law,
Expect not Morcar's name or countenance
To aid thy rash pursuit.

[*Exit MORCAR.*]

EDWIN. That law which bids tormenting doubts subside,
Which gives to Edwin his angelic bride,—
Which bids his falchion strike its destined prey,
That law shall Edwin righteously obey.

[*Exit EDWIN.*]

SCENE IV.

Enter TOSTI and WALTHEOFF.

TOSTI. How stands our preparation?

WALTH. My lord, those hasty levies which our present need
Hath suddenly drawn forth, do lack instruction;
Nor have they yet attained that crafty skill,
Which gives the soldier's arm a tenfold vigour.

TOSTI. We cannot mend the times; they must put forward.

WALTH. The Kentish force already throng the field—

The sturdy Londoners advance the royal standard,
By Harold's favour given to their especial charge.

TOSTI. What stays proud Mercia and Northumbria's Earl ?

My Lord, the King will hence to-morrow ;
And 'tis his Majesty's most strict command
That Mercia and Northumbria lead the van.
Those northern chiefs, for reasons of great force,
Which our discretion may not now unfold,
Shall claim your lordship's vigilance :—
For us, we shall delay our parting hence,
To hurry on those succours of most note,
Which, wanting our keen spur, might slumber here,
Until the God of battle fixed our country's fortune.

Enter MORCAR.

TOSTI. Ha ! when the trumpet calls our warriors forth,
Wherefore doth Morcar linger in the rear ?

MORCAR. To claim, my lord, with thee some moments
question.

I have a suit, to which thou must give ear ;—
And hearing, grant with most confirmed allowance.

TOSTI. Our leisure shall not serve : I will not hear thee.

MORCAR. Thou must, perforce.

TOSTI. Away ! I will not hear thee.

MORCAR. My lord, thou must : we shall enforce a hearing.
To scoff at boys may suit Lord Tosti's humour,
But manhood shall command some larger sufferance.

TOSTI. Begone: thou art importunate.

MORCAR. We part not, Tosti, till those several wrongs,
Which thou hast dared inflict,
Receive their full atonement.

TOSTI. Restrain, ambitious lord, this bold demeanour:
Our high authority provoked, shall else pluck down
That haughty spirit.

MORCAR. Fair words, my lord, or we must sudden choose
A manlier instrument.

TOSTI. Ha! what would this daring threat?
Thou perjured traitor; if——

MORCAR. Traitor! False and calumnious lord!
Take that rebuke. *(Strikes TOSTI.)*

TOSTI. Rebellious slave! thou diest. *(Draws.)*

MORCAR. Let valour prove us! *(Draws, they fight.)*

WALTH. Forbear, my lords—put up your swords:
Shame on the unnatural strife!
Lord Tosti—Morcar—cease, forbear!

Enter HAROLD and Suite.

HAROLD. What means this impious brawl?
Beat down their swords: he dies who dares insult
Our sacred presence.

TOSTI. Vengeance, my liege! let speedy vengeance crush
The ruffian traitor!

MORCAR. Justice, great prince! and let thy patient ear
Deliberate weigh each circumstance,

And where the offence is found,
There let the keen axe fall.

HAROLD. What moved to this disgraceful violence ?

Prince Tosti, speak !

TOSTI. Th' opprobrious wrong which thy own blood hath
borne

From this most dangerous traitor, would, to name it, raise
A burning shame on manhood's cheek.—

My liege, whilst we associate here,

Armed with thy high commission,

With anxious thought, were pondering the means,

How best we might advance our country's service,

And reach those objects of our sovereign's care,

The ruffian Morcar forced our secret council,

With boldest menace braved our potent office ;

And when some check we gave to this rude course,

He dared, infuriate, here assail our person ;

And, by this impious and amazing outrage,

Hath trampled down our country's law,

And set at nought thy dread prerogative.

Then let example teach to after-times,

In this flagitious rebel's sudden fall,

That treason may not, with bold front, defy

The monarch's throne.

HAROLD. Unworthy Morcar ! Dost thou thus return

That constant love, which, with an even course,

Hath still outrun th' extreme of thy deserving ?

Shall hateful broils and bold sedition dare

Invade our inmost sanctuary?
When still thou seest the realm convulsed and torn
By rude assault of its most desperate foes,
Will thy ungrateful sword its fury lend
To give a deeper wound—alike contemned,
Thy king, thy country, and thy country's law?

MORCAR. Renowned and gracious Harold!

But for the reverence I bear
Thy name, thy person, and thy high estate,
My eager voice had sought to deprecate
Some share of this reproof.
The stormy threat which late Lord Tosti thundered
Hath blown to waste, nor ruffled aught within;
But thy reproach inflicts a deadly wound.
Could I betray my sworn allegiance,
’Twere crime my soul abhors; but to forget
The dear memorials of my sovereign’s favour,
Were stain so deep of black ingratitude,
That he who bore it must for ever stand
A loathsome blot in Nature’s fair creation.
That I have used some hasty violence,
I ne’er deny—but mark, how wantonly provoked.
Who calls me traitor,—dares arraign my truth,
And brands my name with infamy.
Had Morcar tamely borne the foul affront,
Harold had justly spurned the tainted traitor.
But my fair truth shall show in my offence,
Which dared assert a fearless innocence.

And here, before thy august majesty,
Before that God who holds the lightning's rage,
I give the lie to Tosti's wanton charge,
And at my body's peril will maintain
My true unshaken loyalty.
Then here I throw my gage; and my firm soul
Bids thee, Lord Tosti, bold defiance.

TOSTI. And here, with heart assured, I take thy gage;
And at my body's peril will affirm,
That thou, Lord Morcar, faithless to thy king,
Art base and false, and a disloyal traitor.

HAROLD. This challenge may not claim our present sufferance;
For while the country's danger calls aloud
For every effort of the monarch's care,
Those wrongs against our person and our state
Shall sleep in present safety.
But here we pledge our royal word and truth,
That when the time shall favour our intent,
This outrage shall demand our strictest scrutiny;
And where we find the spring of the offence,
Our love dismissed, stern justice shall upraise
Her ponderous sword, and the strict balance tried,
With dreadful rigour shall inflict
Her awful judgment.

[*Eæeunt Omnes.*]

A C T III.

SCENE I.

Enter TOSTI and MARGARET.

TOSTI. Illustrious princess ! this thy great resolve,
To offer up that fair and spotless person
A willing sacrifice on Heaven's high altar,
Might wring some envy from th' angelic choir ;
But we have reasons of great weight, to shew
This must not be.

MARGARET. If my devotion and unwearied zeal
May ought promote the interests of our church,
My life will be a happy sacrifice.

TOSTI. The vicious times which we have fallen upon
Call for our active energies :
Else, why does this devoted country stand
A noted prey to barbarous enemies ?
'Tis, that the life of sainted Edward
Was given in vain to an ungrateful people :
'Tis, that his offspring, heirs of all his virtues,
Have languished in obscurity, while those,
Whom Heaven disavows, usurp their just inheritance.

MARGARET. This is most true. But how may we amend
Those evils which thy wisdom points at ?

TOSTI. That shall we present show ; but we must claim
The utmost surety of thy rare discretion.
In brief, it is our purpose to exalt
To that high throne which holy Edward filled,
His lawful issue.

MARGARET. This is most sudden.

How may the mighty end be safe attained ?

TOSTI. The nation call aloud for an anointed branch
From Edward's stock, nor brook delay—
But mark, we must be wary in our course,
For Emma claims thy utmost vigilance.
A dark conspiracy, engendered here
By Mercia's powerful house, would raise the maid
To England's throne ; and at her side,
Companion of her regal state,
Would place the stripling Edwin.

MARGARET. Sure Emma would not dare usurp
Her brother's and my better right ?

TOSTI. The maid is much misled. 'Tis therefore we design
To bear her hence, and place her in strict guard,
Until this dangerous plot shall waste its fury.
Be it thy care so to dispose the maid,
That she may lend a prompt obedience.

MARGARET. I will. She must obey.

TOSTI. 'Tis nobly said ; and now I see a brighter star
Pervade the darkness which encompassed us.

The Scottish king a gallant embassy hath sent
To claim thy hand, and happier days are promised.
I see united on one brow the glorious crowns—
I see the future all exposed before me !
Those crowns united shall defy the world ;
And where the sun first shews its orient light,
To where it sheds a soft declining ray,
Nations shall bend beneath thy potent sway.

MARGARET. This is a brilliant vision, truly.

TOSTI. Away, away ! We are observed.

[*Exit* MARGARET.]

Enter ELFRIDA.

ELFRIDA. What strange alarm hath caused this quick retreat,
So sudden and abrupt ?
May not Elfrida join thy secret conference ?

TOSTI. What would thy question import ?
Canst thou not see, that Godwin's mighty house
Shakes to its deep foundations ?
The senseless people clamour for a change ;
But my unceasing cares have lulled to rest
The daring hopes of Edward's favoured race,
And by their influence have curbed,
For some short hour, the rabble's fury.
Much still we meditate to sooth their rage,
And I must hasten hence to stay
Th' impending mischief.

[*Exit* TOSTI.]

ELFRIDA *sola.*

ELFRIDA. This cannot be—he mocks my simple reason !

Wherefore such studied mystery ?

That moody brow—those looks estranged and wild !

Those troubled dreams, which oft convulse the frame,

And rob sweet sleep of all its balm—

The fitful start—those strange and broken accents,

Issuing unbidden from th' unconscious mind,

Like echoes traversing the vaulted cavern—

All, all too plain portend some coming evil,

I see the deep abyss.—

Have our most sacred ties no stronger hold ?

Will princely Baldwin patiently endure

An outrage to his daughter ?—

But stay,—be still my heart—

Elfrida must commune with bitter thoughts,

And counsel take of honour,

But not vengeance.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

5

Enter EDWIN and EDNOTH, meeting.

EDWIN. What says my Emma ? speak, Ednoth,

Does she consent ? Were thy companions prompt

To bear away the maid ?

EDNOTH. Thy friends were ready, but denied admittance.

EDWIN. How ! were they men ? Know they the use of swords ?

EDNOTH. No braver spirits wield the trenchant blade ;
But we might not perform a deed impossible.
We found the palace guarded, all entrance strictly barred,
While numerous bands patrol the straightened avenue.

EDWIN. Confusion !—whence this care unused ?

Where lurks an enemy ?

EDNOTH. 'Tis given abroad, that secret treason lurks
Within the realm, and that a desperate faction
Would place King Edward's issue on the throne.

EDWIN. The treason lurks within the palace ;

But we will trace it to its inmost source.

Prepare our friends, and I will seek the plot

In Tosti's heart, or fall in the attempt.

EDNOTH. It must not be, my lord. This open violence

Would lend a sanction to those dark surmises,

Which now would question Edwin's loyalty.

And 'tis not here the mischief halts :

Thy Emma, by this rash and mad attempt,

Would risk some scandal, and would easier fall

A victim to Lord Tosti's malice.

EDWIN. Shall I not snatch her unprotected youth

From the fell tiger's fangs ?

EDNOTH. The attempt would give his rage a freer sway.

While fair Elfrida and the vestal Margaret

Protect the maid, her only danger lives

In thy intemperance.

Enter WALTHEOFF.

WALTH. My lord, I am enjoined to urge thy hasty march ;
Our legions have advanced in proud array,
And it would tarnish Edwin's splendid name,
Were he to lose an hour—one precious hour,
Of that proud day which shall assure
Our country's freedom.

EDWIN. My lord, some cares which touch us nearly,
Forbid our prompt departure.

WALTH. Edwin, I know those cares which now distract thee,
And, as a friend, would share them ;
But now the time's decree must be obeyed.
Thou must not let thy slighted laurels fade ;
And thy good sword shall win, with better grace,
The object of thy wishes.
Then on to battle ; and if a soldier's arm,
When gentle peace hath sheathed our weary swords,
May aught advance thy suit, I pledge my faith,
That with a brother's warmth I will assert
Thy high desert, and stand thy champion
'Gainst all who dare oppose thy just pretensions.

Enter Coxo.

COXO. Mercia ! the King pursues his rapid march,
And oft demands your presence.
His Majesty doth graciously intend
To give Lord Edwin some most gallant charge

In marshalling the approaching battle ;
'Tis, then, most needful that he join the camp.
The brave Northumbria, too, your noble brother,
Hath bid me say, that if young Edwin miss
The glorious fight, he will not own
Thy blood akin to his most generous race.

EDWIN. My lords, I shall obey this weighty summons,
Tho' it should lead to deep perdition.
Then come, infernal Mars, prepare
Thy hellish banquet. Let this, my sword,
Let loose thy sanguine currents ;
For I would have a scene of present horror,
Whose tragic images should fright
Imagination from its seat,
And bid tormenting memory cease
Its dreadful office.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Interior of a Castle.

Enter EMMA.

EMMA. These dismal walls, stript of whate'er might tell
Their ancient story, are mute to all my question.
Why am I thus immured ? Why here alone,
Denied the solace of all human converse ?
Those ponderous gates and massy doors shut out
The cheering ray of hope ;

But still the heart is free, and knows no dungeon.
What treason could a helpless orphan raise
To terrify our manhood?
Tosti in vain would bid me now abjure
Those vows long sealed in Heaven;
For, while the mind retains its consciousness,
Emma can ne'er to Edwin prove untrue.
Or I do dream, or through the fractured casement,
I saw Elfrida glide with hasty step
From yon projecting turret.
If she be near, no dangers can await me.
Again I'll seek the friendly casement,
And try to catch some passing sounds
Which may relieve this solitude.

[*Exit* EMMA.

SCENE IV.

Another Apartment in the Castle.

Enter TOSTI.

TOSTI. 'Tis well, and our strong nets are thrown;
The game shall not escape us.
Northumbria, I defy thee!
And thou, audacious boy, shall curse too late
A dangerous rivalry!
Raised to our bed, her princely birth
Shall give the seal and stamp of right
To our established power.

Elfrida ! yes, Elfrida ! What then ?
She must obedience yield to our behests.
Her sire, imperious Baldwin, shall not dare
Oppose our settled purpose.
Hark ! what noise ? the sound of horse !
No, 'tis but the rustling wind which howls
In yonder vaults, where dead men sleep.
This is the hour when spectres roam abroad,
To fright our weak imaginations ;
When Angels close Heaven's radiant portals,
That eyes so pure may not behold foul deeds of horror.
Why do I falter like a coward thus ?
Have I outbraved the shock of murderous battle,
To harbour one compunctious feeling now ?
Some peril follows on each high resolve.
On, Tosti, on ! to consummate thy work,
Which on this head shall place the royal diadem.

[*Exit* TOSTI.]

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

Enter EMMA, from a secret passage leading from the Castle.

EMMA. I bless the gracious power which watches o'er
The helplessness of youth.

'Tis Heaven itself protects the innocent !

An angel, sure, in fair Elfrida's form,

Unbarred the prison and my footsteps guided ;

Else how had Emma traced her mazy way

Through yon dark labyrinth ?

'Tis time to cast aside this female garb,

Which may breed danger while a lawless crew

Infest the land.

Yes, I will Edwin follow to the field,

His dangers share, and refuge from affliction seek

In the close ranks of battle.

[*Exit EMMA.*

SCENE II.

Enter MORCAR and MONK, meeting.

MONK. One much a stranger to this goodly realm

Would claim thy gentle courtesy. Then say,

Illustrious knight, where doth Northumbria's earl
Display his princely banners ?

MORCAR. Thou seest Northumbria's earl ;

What wouldst thou, father ?

Speak on in full assurance.

MONK. This is a chance most fortunate !

Then thus the noble William :—

Thy messenger hath safely borne his charge,
And his great errand is most dearly tendered.

Those several demands and just conditions,
Which thy most wholesome wisdom would impose,
Shall all receive an ample acquiescence.

I bear the Norman's sovereign command

To give thy fair expectancy

A full and boundless confirmation ;

And with this pledge, the mighty William

Would tender and assure his dearest love

To royal Tosti.

Ha ! What means the strangeness in thy looks ?

Am I betrayed ? I should have asked thy signet.

Art thou not then Northumbria's earl,

The princely Tosti ?

MORCAR. The princely *Traitor* !

Away, thou wretched slave, or thy vile blood
Shall stain my yet untarnished sword.

That I did give thee free assurance

To utter forth this hateful treason,

Shall gain thy present safety ;

But if, within the hour, thy worthless footsteps
Should soil the camp, the garb thou hast defiled
Shall not protect thee from a halter.

Begone !

[*Exit Monk.*

This have I held suspect :

But how may we pursue the daring treason ?

Shall I betray my country and my king

By a most dangerous silence ?

Yet who shall e'er a willing credence give

To crimes so monstrous and unnatural ?—

Will Harold's generous nature e'er believe

That his own blood can foster rank rebellion ?

Shall I call forth the public axe of Justice,

To do that office which my sword has claimed ?

Is it permitted, without just reproach

Of violated honour, to draw forth

The perilous secret from th' unwilling breast ;

To seize with cunning frand the secret thought

(That property which tyrants cannot reach),

And the base theft indulged, to use the prize

For his destruction whom we lately robbed ?

Oh, no ! It must not be. I love my king,

And will my country serve with my best blood :

But never shall a base, revolting office,

Sully the splendour of that name,

A noble ancestry bequeathed without a stain.

[*Exit MORCAR.*

SCENE III.

Enter TOSTI and EDGAR ATHELING.

EDGAR. And shall my table smile with rich abundance ?

TOSTI. It shall, my prince. Delicious fruit of every season
Shall crown thy ample board.

EDGAR. Choice wines withal ?

TOSTI. Aye, gentle prince : the generous grape,
In one continuous course, shall pour
Its luscious stream into thy groaning cellars.

EDGAR. And will our parks be stocked with game ;
The spotted hind, and birds of curious feather ?

TOSTI. They shall : and thy unequalled hounds,
Snuffing the wind, with their deep mouth shall scare
The frightened elements, whilst thy fleet coursers,
Of immortal breed, shall safely bear thee
O'er the deep gulph of fiery Acheron.
Thy hawks shall mount with such rare pinion,
That from their giddy height, spurning the sun,
They shall descry and seize the trembling lark,
Torn from the lion's paw—

EDGAR. Good, good ! Let us have ponds and brooks,
Where, in the noontide heat, we may bestow an hour
T' intrap the finny prey.

TOSTI. Thou shalt : and to thy royal hook and line,
All virtue shall belong, of right divine.

EDGAR. We shall have robes and palaces ?

TOSTI. Aye, gentle prince. Thy robes shall vie with Tyrian dye;
Thy palaces shall brush the sky,
And bid old Time defiance.

EDGAR. We must have dancing, sports, and dainty pleasures?

TOSTI. Such merry sports shall crown our days and nights,
That gods and goddesses shall sue
To be admitted to our revels.

EDGAR. A beauteous queen should grace our royal state?

TOSTI. The proudest dames shall court thy high alliance,
And with obsequious duty vie
To win thy royal favour.

EDGAR. Good, good! This, this it were, to be a king indeed;
And I will so comport myself,
That the most potent emperors
Shall call me gentle brother.
Decked out in robe of majesty,
We will assume our state with gorgeous pomp and show.

TOSTI. But mark thou, Edgar, if of our intent
Touching thy sister Emma, aught escape,
Foul fiends and furies shall be sent
To vex and torture thee.

EDGAR. Oh! not a breath shall 'scape me.
But when I'm king, may I be tortured thus?

TOSTI. When thou art king, 'twill be thy glorious privilege
To vex and torture others:
Take heed, I see the royal standard near.
Some further hints for thy instruction
We shall impart at more convenient leisure.

*Flourish.—Enter HAROLD, GURTH, LEOFRINE, MORCAR,
EDWIN, HEREWALD, WALTHEOFF, EDRIC, COXO,
EDNOTH, and Attendants.*

HAROLD. Lord Tosti, this meeting is most welcome ;
For we had feared some rude detention,
And could but ill have spared a brother's sword
In the approaching conflict.

TOSTI. My liege, we have, with zeal unwearied,
Directed that most weighty service,
Which from your majesty we held in special charge.

HAROLD. We nothing doubt it ; and our present force
Shall give the Norman gallant entertainment.
Let all our chiefs maintain a ready guard ;
For e'er Aurora spread her crimson mantle
In yonder East, we shall invoke the God of Battle.

GURTH. My liege, will not this hasty onset give
The Norman best advantage ?
Our ranks, much thinned by the Norwegian sword,
Display not their full complement ;
And those new levies which our haste has sought,
Lack all the skill of martial discipline.
Each hour that we delay shall give us strength,
And waste the strength of our impatient foe :
For he shall not recruit those mighty numbers,
Which tardy war, disease, and meagre famine,
Sweep from his lessening rank.
The country owns our mild and rightful sway,

And willing yields to us its ample stores,
While its rich fruits shall fly the Norman grasp.
Each mazy track and strong defile,
Each marsh and fen, each glen for secret ambush,
Each post of vantage, to us familiar known,
Shall favour our defence, and give the foe,
Entangled in our toils, an easy prey
To our avenging swords.
Then let not crude suspicion warp
My true intent, when I would urge
A temperate course, which, well pursued,
Shall spare the soldier's blood, and without risk
Of vile discomfiture, give to our arms
Their noblest triumph.—

HAROLD. What says Lord Tosti to this counsel?

TOSTI. The argument is strong in specious reason,
And much it marks the wisdom of the prince.
But some shrewd circumstance, tho' more remote,
His care hath missed ; and this, if we supply,
Our rambling dart shall reach its destined point.
My liege, if we the precious season waste
In tedious warfare on this distant coast,
The Scot, our sworn domestic foe, emboldened,
Shall quit his fastness, and while we give front
To bastard William, his rage unchecked,
Like a descending cataract, shall spread
Wide devastation through this fair domain.
The Dane, too, lately worsted, shall renew

His fierce attack, and in our absence favoured,
Shall ravage what the Scottish sword has spared.
A lingering warfare is but irksome toil,
And tardy blows ill suit our English temper.
Our brave Militia, long detained in arms,
Shall cast impatient looks to dear-loved home.
'Tis not in numbers that we should account
The force of battle ; 'tis daring confidence.
If we step back, or shew a wavering spirit,
We paralyze our bravest legions.
Give but the soldier noble confidence,
You give him victory ; for still we see
The object gained by boldest means pursued :
He conquer must, who will not be subdued.

HAROLD. Northumbria, we would hear thy sentiment.

MORCAR. My liege, the noble Prince who counselled wise delay,
Hath spoke my present sentiment ;
For I have tasted the severe rebuke,
Which rash presumption justly merits.
When late I led our Northern youth
To meet th' impetuous Dane, eager to reap alone
Those honours which our gallant chiefs
Should all have equal shared, shameful defeat
Chastised my vain temerity.
It is not desperate valour which achieves
The noblest feats of martial enterprize :
Wisdom should guide the hand which valour prompts,
And the proud chief who rules an army's fate,

Incurs no just reproach for wary caution.
The soldier's life is precious to the state,
And must be held a sacred trust by him
To whom command is given.
Then let us win, by sage forbearance,
That noblest conquest which shall not have cost
An English tear.

EDWIN. Oh, no ! to arms, brave Prince ! lead on to battle :
Thy warriors shall not brook this cold delay.

LEOFRINE. To battle ! dear my liege, lead on to battle !

HAROLD. Peace, thoughtless youth !

These motives balance ; but we do purpose
To bear an even course, alike remote
From rash temerity and timid caution.
We hold the ground of 'vantage, which t' improve
By strong entrenchment, and those needful works
Of best defence, shall be our present care.
To force these heights the Norman's skill in vain
Shall stretch its utmost nerve ; his baffled arms,
From our rough blows recoiling, shall confess,
He may not safely rouse the lion in his den.
If he will fight at desperate odds,
Then let him come, and we will bid him welcome.

Enter D'ARCY, a Norman Lord, preceded by a Herald.

D'ARCY. If I have leave to speak,
Then thus the mighty Norman :—
The Crown and State which Harold hath usurped,

He bids thee presently resign,
That he may place the precious diadem
Where it of right belongs. If thou obey,
That favour which Earl Godwin's heir may claim
Shall be bestowed, with such addition
As thy approved desert may fairly win.
If thy perverted will, infatuate,
Should scornfully reject this gracious proffer,
He bids thee now prepare for quick destruction :
And if thou dare in listed field, appear,
Arms to arms opposed, the noble William,
His princely state forgot, in equal combat
Will prove thy utmost valour.
He stakes his Dukedom and his fair renown
Against thy worthless self, and will commit
His life and cause to this arbitrement.
Then take from me the Norman's bold defiance.

HAROLD. Then thus we answer thy audacious threat.
The Crown and State which Harold here affects,
God and his country's voice bestowed,
And he, till death, will rightfully maintain
The Diadem, against all who dare oppose.
The Norman's proffered favour we hold in utmost scorn ;
And sooner shall proud William supplicate
Our royal clemency, than we descend
To give his least demand observance.
If he would now provoke an awful doom,
Bid him lead on his desperate bands,

And we shall stand, firm and undaunted still,
The deadliest effort of his fury ;
And when our battle joins, if favouring chance
Shall bring us front to front, then shall he prove
Our steadfast valour ; and his haughty spirit,
Now towering high, shall shrink from our embrace.
For that vain challenge to the listed field,
Say, if this goodly realm by us were held
Like some light bauble, slave to our caprice ;
If Harold's life were not his country's right,
Harold had seized the proffered gage,
And eager sought the fell encounter.
Say further, lest thy boastful chief suspect,
Base fear hath mixed with this our just resolve,
Harold shall ne'er survive that hour
Which seals his country's doom,
Which gives the Norman victory.
This answer bear to Norman William.

D'ARCY. This answer will I bear to mighty William ;
And it shall cause the land to reek
With English blood.

[*Exit D'ARCY and suite.*]

MORCAB. The Norman will come on, my liege.
TOSTI. He will not fight 'gainst desperate odds.
EDWIN. Fight he shall, if I may move him.
HAROLD. My friends, let us prepare for every chance
Which fortune may dispose.
Let each repair to his appointed station,

And watch attentive his peculiar charge.
Such further order as events demand,
Our chiefs shall timely have for their observance.

[*Exeunt HAROLD and suite.*]

Manet EDWIN.

EDWIN. Tosti! Lord Tosti!

The coward will not hear me.
But vengeance shall not sleep,
Emma fled, or in the traitor's power,
Or held a willing prisoner!—No—no.

Enter EMMA, disguised in boy's attire.

EDWIN. What wouldst thou, boy?—

EMMA. I ask thy generous protection,
With leave to serve thee.

EDWIN. Who art thou?

What service canst thou render?
Thou art too young to bear the toils of war.
That hand the distaff better should become
Than the unwieldy sword;—thy tender frame
Shall ill endure war's rough habiliments;
And if the inward spirit well assort
With this thy dainty form, thou shalt not prove
Too rude a soldier.

EMMA. Young as I am, I yet have lived too long—
Nature to man hath various forms assigned;
But 'tis the mind which gives his best distinction.

The costly pearl we judge not from the shell,
And worthless forms enclose the richest gems.
My courage let th' approaching battle try;
And if I fall, I do but cast away
A grievous burthen.

EDWIN. Art thou unfortunate?

EMMA. The griefs which I have borne would sore oppress
One of more manly firmness.

EDWIN. Tell me thy story, youth—some needful balm
Perchance I may afford thy wounded spirit.

EMMA. The wound too deeply lies—thy friendly hand
Would, but to touch it, give a mortal pang.

EDWIN. Grant that the wound admit not present cure,
From me some friendly aid may give thy spirit
A nobler strength to bear it.

EMMA. Break! break, this heart!—

I loved, I fondly loved a virtuous maid,
And she my passion met with equal ardour.
Soft are the varying tints of early morn,
And sweet and fair the opening flowers of spring;
But far more fair the blush of innocence,
The grace and charm of female loveliness;—
We pledged our faith, and waited but the hour
Which should give sanction to our vows,
When, lo! these pestilent wars arose,
And thy fierce captains tore me from her arms—
Some days I tarried in the bustling camp;
But soon 'twas rumoured, that a Norman band,

Mad with the lust of devilish rapine,
Had sacked the country round.
I flew to rescue her:—but, oh!—heart-rending grief!
I found—

EDWIN. How! speak!—

EMMA. The ruffian band had borne away the maid,
Lost, lost to me for ever!

EDWIN. Gods! Why will Harold pause and Morcar urge delay?
Thou hast sad cause to weep, unhappy youth.
Take courage, boy: my life upon it—
I will redeem the maid.

EMMA. Wouldst thou exalt to thy much-honoured bed
One—?

EDWIN. Ha!—thou hast disturbed me, youth:
Thy hand hath touched a secret chord—
No more of this—I will protect thee, boy,
And will requite thy service—
Anon thou shalt prepare my glittering armour—
Thou hast no weapon, youth;
Here, take this dagger, and if perchance,
(*Gives a dagger.*)

Dishonour e'er await thee,
The faithful point will give free passage hence
To heaven.—

EMMA. I take the precious gift, and near my heart
Will place it. There it may become
A nearer inmate, if, perchance,
Dishonour e'er befall unhappy Emma.

EDWIN. Ha! what do I hear!

Emma?—or one who bore that name,

Now fugitive and fallen!

EMMA. She is as pure as thy unblemished steel.

The bride of Mercia's Earl had ne'er survived

Her honour.

EDWIN. This cannot be! My senses do deceive me!

Yet, 'tis her voice! Yes, yes,—'tis Emma's self!—

EMMA. It is; it is thy own true Emma. (*Embrace.*)

EDWIN. I do believe—thou art my own, my own true bride,

My heart's long-cherished idol—

How could I wrong thee in my secret thought!

My soul discards th' unwilling doubt.—

But why is Emma here, and thus disguised?

Fly, fly, and leave the scene of direful war:

Haste, haste from hence, where danger must await thee.

EMMA. *Never!*—ne'er again will Emma leave thee—

Thou wilt not go to meet the dangerous foe.

Thou art not called to battle—

Our scattered bands are not prepared to face

The Norman with advantage.

Canst thou again forsake me, Edwin—

So soon again?

EDWIN. Would Emma counsel fear, and bid me shun

The coming fight, which seals our country's fate?

Shall Edwin stand a thing for boys to scoff at?

EMMA. If thou must go, then will I follow thee;

For Emma ne'er again will quit thy side.

And here, before high heaven, I vow,
The hour which sees my Edwin fall,
Shall seal his Emma's doom.

EDWIN. This must not be. But thou shalt share
The triumph of our arms: thy hand shall place
A favour in my helm to scare the Norman.
Come, Emma, come, the time is short;—
I burn to drive the hateful ruffians hence,
And clear the land of their pollution.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T V.

S C E N E I.

Camp at Hastings.

Flourish of Martial Music.

*Enter HAROLD, TOSTI, GURTH, LEOFRINE, MORCAR,
EDWIN, WALTHEROFF, HEREWALD, EDRIC, EDNOTH,
EMMA, EDGAR ATHELING (Edgar dressed and armed
like the King), with Guards and Soldiers.*

HAROLD. Illustrious princes, chiefs, and valiant captains,
My countrymen and fellow-soldiers all,—
If e'er again we meet in fair assembly,
'Twill be to welcome joyful victory.
When gentle peace her olive garland wreathes,
No virtue claims more dear regard than mild humanity;
But when the trumpet sounds, and the loud din of arms
Announces battle, the soldier must put off
Compunctious forms, must steel his manly heart,
Brace his firm nerve, and his strong arm erect,
To hurl destruction on the foe.
To-day we're called to prove our nation's valour,

To guard the land, our cherished homes, and sacred
altars,

From the rude grasp of foreign violence :

This day decides, if we have yet a country ;

Or if this mighty realm must now submit

To bear a foreign yoke, and its proud chiefs

Do vassal homage to a haughty stranger !

Then, who so base that would not sacrifice

This span of life to purchase freedom ?

To rescue all which can ennoble and endear

This brief existence ?

Let every soldier strain his utmost nerve,

As if his country's honour and his own

Were now committed to his single sword.

Strike home ! and one brave effort more

Shall drive the foe from our insulted shores,

And crown our martial labours.

All shout. Lead on ! Lead on, brave prince, to battle.

EDWIN. Oh ! my heart leaps at these inspiring sounds.

HAROLD. Lord Tosti shall conduct the right of battle ;

Undaunted Gurth and youthful Leofrine

Will lead the left :

Ourselves shall lead those chosen legions

Which form the main of our equipment.

EDGAR. My liege, I do entreat that, with Lord Tosti here,

I may lead on my faithful vassals.

HAROLD. Cousin, indulge thy own good pleasure.—

But wherefore thus arrayed ?

Those plumes shall breed some present danger;
For he who now would covet Harold's honours,
Must wear those honours at some hazard.

TOSTI. My liege, he would ward off some portion of that
danger,

Which will too surely point
Against your sacred person.

EDGAR. Aye, my liege, this would I do.

HAROLD. If love for us hath moved to this proceeding,
We should account our person's safety
Too dearly purchased.

(Trumpet sounds.)

Enter a Norman Herald.

HERALD. The boldest knight yet known to martial fame,
Since the proud days which boast Orlando's name,
Sends brave defiance to that English youth,
Renowned for valour, constancy, and truth,
Who stands pre-eminent among the rest
For gallant deeds, a perfect knight confest :—
Him, if he dare in listed field appear,
With sword and buckler, barbed lance, or spear,
Brave Taillifer will meet in equal fight,
And send him headlong to the realms of night.
If there be such, who would in arms approve
His prince's honour, and the virtuous love
Of her whom he adores, we here proclaim
His prince foresworn, his mistress dead to shame;—

The monarch false—usurper of the throne;—
The mistress faithless, whom his heart would own.
Then let the champion try his utmost might,
Brave Taillifer now dares the deadly fight.

EDWIN. My liege, I claim the right of combat;
And on this vaunting Norman will approve
My knighthood, valour, loyalty, and love.

MORCAR. Thou shalt not dare. I claim, my liege,
The right to vindicate my country's fame.

TOSTI. As first among those princes who surround
The monarch's throne, I hold the first pretension;—
But since Lord Edwin waits the fit occasion
To grace his recent honours with the palm
Of chivalrous adventure,
I cede to him the right of combat.
For Morcar, here, his sword is pledged to us;
And when the time shall give our wishes scope,
We shall demand a full acquittance!

MORCAR. Base and perfidious Tosti!—Traitor! well I know
thee!

(*aside.*)

My liege, this must not be. We must not stake
Upon the unsteady cast of heedless youth,
Our nation's martial character.
Firm manhood must oppose the nervous arm
Of manly vigour; and youth is but oppressed
With that which should demand the powers
Of full maturity.

HAROLD. Northumbria, you disparage much

Young Edwin's noble quality.
We have just confidence in his high worth,
And will commit our country's cause
To his unquestioned prowess ;
For we would teach these lofty boasters,
When from our youth they take such lusty blows,
What honour they may hope to win
From our experienced manhood.
Then, let the Norman champion now come forth ;—
We give our pledge that he shall here command
Most courteous usage.

Enter TAILLIFER with Attendants.

TAILLIFER. Who dares oppose the might of Taillifer ?

EDWIN. I dare oppose a braver knight.

TAILLIFER. Art thou of generous blood, a knight installed
With all accustomed rites ?

EDWIN. I am ; and will my knighthood prove
Upon thy bruised crest.

TAILLIFER. No equal owns the warlike chief
Whom I unforced obey—
No rival fears the matchless maid
To whom I homage pay.
Who dares deny that these no equals know,
My sword shall send him to the shades below.

EDWIN. All this, with steadfast soul, I dare deny,
And here in arms thy utmost force defy.

(They fight.)

EMMA. Ye, hovering angels, shield my lord ! (*Aside.*)

TAILLIFER. Submit, thou rash and beardless knight,
Ere we destroy thee in this mortal fight.

EDWIN. Sooner the firmament unhinged shall fall,
And in its ruin Nature's self appal!
Redouble, then, thy vain and fruitless blows ;
No coward fear the heart of Edwin knows.

(*Fight again. TAILLIFER falls.*
Shout from the English.)

All. Hail ! valiant Edwin !

Hail ! England's champion !

HAROLD. Brave Mercia, thou hast gained a dearer place
In our applauding love,
And thy admiring country shall bestow
Its richest prize, the homage due
To thy unrivalled gallantry.

Enter Coxo.

COXO. My liege, the Norman puissance is on foot,
And bends his rapid march to our encampment,
With menace of a desperate assault.

HAROLD. Then, 'tis most fit that we dispose ourselves
The threatened onset to repel.
Let all our chieftains haste to join their ranks.
My friends, we will not wrong your generous nature,
By urging aught to stimulate that ardour
Which we so oft have seen conspicuous.
Harold is well assured that every warrior here

Will still surpass his country's expectation,
 Then let us seek the field at honour's call,
 Resolved to save the state, or perish in its fall.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*Field of Battle.—March of the Norman Troops.—
 Trumpet sounds a Charge.—Enter EDWIN, MORCAR,
 EMMA, and Soldiers engaged with the Normans, who
 retreat.*

EDWIN. Stay, stay, ye Norman churls,
 Lest we too easy gain a graceless triumph !

MORCAR. Edwin, forbear :

Urge not the keen pursuit thus rashly ;
 Advance not now beyond that barrier
 Where we are charged to hold our strong defence.
 Halt, Mercia, halt—
 On thy allegiance, I command thee.

[*Normans advance again.*

EDWIN. Stay, ye unblushing slaves,
 And give my sword a nobler banquet.

[*Fight. Normans retire, pursued by EDWIN,
 MORCAR, and Followers.*

SCENE III.

Another part of the Field.

*Enter GURTH, LEOFRINE, and Followers, pursuing
the Normans.*

GURTH. 'Tis bravely done! Drive back the foe!
Strike home, my valiant countrymen!

[Normans retire, pursued.]

*Re-enter GURTH, LEOFRINE, and Followers, retiring
before the Normans.*

GURTH. Curse the disastrous chance!

Why halts the right?

Why hath Lord Tosti left us thus exposed,

To wage unequal combat?

Bear up, my friends, 'gainst this reverse.

[LEOFRINE falls.]

GURTH. Oh, save the prince!

[Stands over the body.]

Stand firm, my generous countrymen!

My earldom shall reward the noble effort

Which rescues now the youthful hero.

Bear off the prince.—

Advance, my valiant countrymen;

Once more renew the charge.

Untoward fate! Unhappy England!

[GURTH falls, English retreat.]

SCENE IV.

Another part of the Field.

Enter HAROLD, COXO, EDRIC, EDNOTH, and Followers.

COXO. Retire, my liege, at distance from the field ;

Those wounds demand an instant succour.

HAROLD. Never ! here is my throne or sepulchre !

Haste, Ednoth, haste, repress the Kentish ardour—

Recal impetuous Mercia from pursuit ;

Bid Morcar not advance his force

Beyond our strong entrenchment.

[*Exit EDNOTH.*

Twice have we driven the Norman back

With terrible discomfiture,

But twice our rash ungoverned fury

Hath lost the fair advantage ;

And our disordered ranks, recoiling,

Have then rolled back, spreading confusion.

What means Prince Tosti in this perilous hour ?

Haste, Edric, bid him quick support our drooping forces.

Enter HEREWOLD.

HEREWOLD. Retire, my liege, for present safety.

Treason, where least suspected,

Hath robbed us of a well-earned victory.

The Norman Bands have found

Free passage through Lord Tosti's guard

Without rebuke, and now encompass

Our fainting legions.

Enter WALTHROFF.

WALTH. Retire, my liege, while yet a hope remain
Of our devoted country.
The Princes, Gurth and Leofrine,
Already press the plain. Abandoned
And cut off by foulest treachery,
Nobly they bore the unequal fight,
And scorned to yield.

HABOLD. If all be lost, our fate is fixed.
Come on, my friends, once more unto the field.
This treachery in our own blood
Had blighted even the triumph of our arms.
Come on, my friends—one struggle more
To save our country.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Another part of the Field.

Enter TOSTI, EDGAR, and Followers.

TOSTI. Soldiers, countrymen, and friends !
The love we bear ye, and our just regard
For this much injured Prince, have prompted us
To that fair course which we have here pursued.
The valiant Norman, bearing the command
And high commission of Imperial Rome,
Hath come to place Prince Edgar on the throne
Of his anointed race.

Then, hail our brave deliverers !

All hail, Prince Edgar, Sovereign of this Realm,

And Heaven's approved Vicegerent !

EDGAR. My friends, I am the rightful prince,

And born to wear the crown.

Enter EDRIC.

EDRIC. My lord, the King doth marvel much

That you inactive stand, while all around

The battle rages.

TOSTI. Then bid him marvel on.

That we inactive stand, some reasons of great force,

Shall be our warranty.

EDRIC. My lord, his Majesty commands

That you advance with speed

To succour our encompassed legions.

TOSTI. Our leisure shall not serve.

Bid Harold now remember, if he may,

Those noted injuries which we too tamely bore.—

For thee, brave Edric, if thou tender aught

Thy present safety or thy future fortune,

Accept the Norman's generous protection—

Join this our chosen band, and we will plead

Thy great deserving, which perforce shall claim

The mighty William's favour.

EDRIC. I scorn thy purpose, and abhor

The base unnatural traitor.

If thou art bent on foul rebellion,

Then quickly join th' opposing ranks,
That my good sword may have free scope
To strike thy perjured heart. *[Exit EDRIC.]*

TOSTI. Move on, my friends ; for longer should we tarry,
We may encounter some obstruction. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VI.

Enter EDWIN wounded, and supported by EMMA.

EDWIN. Soft, I can no further ;
The Norman spear has done its work !
EMMA. Mercy, sweet heaven !
Edwin, support your noble spirit ;
We soon shall reach some friendly succour.
EDWIN. Never—I feel the vital stream
Fast ebb within me—my languid limbs
Refuse their wonted office: I can no further.—
Here let me rest. What place so rude,
That will not give free liberty to die !
EMMA. Just Heaven support me !
This is beyond all human sufferance.
EDWIN. Fly, Emma, save thyself !
Fly from this fatal field !
Tell Morcar,—
Thy image floats before me—*(Faints.)*
EMMA. Oh ! cruel, unrelenting fate !
Awake, my Edwin ! 'Tis Emma calls !

Oh ! hear that voice, which once had charms

For Edwin !—

One look, one last embrace !—

Return, my Edwin ! thy Emma calls !

Thy lost, deserted Emma !

Oh ! save her from distraction !

EDWIN. What mean those sounds ?

Where am I ?—What angel hath recalled

My hovering spirit ?

EMMA. Mercy, sweet Heaven !

He lives ;—he will not leave his Emma.

EDWIN. Is that a vision, which beguiles my sense ;

Or does some phantom mock my faltering reason ?

My Emma !—

EMMA. Yes, yes, it is thy Emma !

Once more receive her to thy bosom,

And she will welcome death in Edwin's arms.

EDWIN. Fly, save thyself from outrage !

EMMA. Oh !—Never, never !

No more shall Emma leave thee !

That fate which summons Edwin hence,

Shall summon Emma too—(*Draws her dagger.*)

EDWIN. Forbear !

Enter TOSTI and Followers.

TOSTI. Ha ! this is a prize beyond all price.

Seize, seize audacious Mercia, bear him to the camp—

The Norman nobly will reward the service.

EMMA. Hold, ruffians, hold !

Wilt thou pursue thy victim still in death ?

'Tis time then to avenge her wrongs.

The faithful point shall do its office :

'Twas Edwin's gift to Emma.

Monster, 'tis Emma strikes.

(Stabs TOSTI.)

TOSTI. Curse the malignant hand of fate !

To fall when I had reached the goal,

And by a feeble woman !

(Dies.)

EDWIN. This troubled scene must pass.

A dimness steals upon me—

All is confused——

'Tis darkness all around !—'Tis death !—

Emma ! Emma !

(Dies.)

EMMA. He calls ! I come—I come ! 'tis Edwin calls !

I follow thee ! Yes, yes, the ministers of death

Have chased from heaven sweet mercy :

How ? Not move ! gone—gone ! but the soul lives.

Oh no ! thou art not frightful, Death.

This is our bridal couch.

Sweet is this peaceful slumber !

One kiss—'tis no reproach.

I see the angels hover round him—

They shall not snatch him from me.

Ha ! there is blood upon the point !

This tainted blood must not with Emma's mix.

(Throws away her dagger.)

I'll find a steel without a stain,

(Takes EDWIN's dagger from his belt.)

Pure and spotless as his honour.

1st SOLDIER. Strike down the boy, disarm him quickly.

(Seizes EMMA.)

2d SOLDIER. Convey him to the Norman camp ;

We gain a princely ransom.

EMMA. Avaunt, ye slaves ;

Would ye insult a woman ?

Cease, cowards, cease, or use your swords like men.

SOLDIERS. Bear him off, bear him off ;

Retire, retire.

EMMA. Ruffians, forbear,—release your hold !

Oh, Edwin, let thy dagger save me !

(Is forced away by the Soldiers, who retire.)

Enter HAROLD (wounded, and supported by COXO and EDRIC), MORCAR, WALTHEOFF, HEREWALD, EDNOTH, and Followers.

HAROLD. Here stay, my friends, for here our toils must end.

I feel thy powerful call, which needs must be obeyed—

Death hath already thinned our ranks,

And claims one victim more.

How frightful in defeat !—in victory

How glorious !

EDNOTH. Oh, grievous sight ! The valiant Edwin !

MORCAR. This had embittered e'en the proudest victory.

Ill-fated youth, War's ruthless scythe,

Hath not this day cut down so fair a flower !

Edwin, farewell ! Mercia, this last embrace !

(Kneels and embraces the body.)

WALTHEROFF. Lord Tosti, too, is here among the slain.

HAROLD. Oh, Nature ! thou hast swerved from thy eternal law—

Tho' strange and varied thy creations,

Thy voice disowns the hateful parricide.

My friends, our individual griefs are nought

Amid the wreck of our distracted country ;

For who shall now deplore his private loss,

When here the noble fabric of the state,

In one rude shock o'erthrown, lies prostrate.

Could Harold with his life have saved the realm,

His last expiring moment had been crowned

With heart-elating triumph :

But this has been denied, and in our fall

We see the State's confusion.

Some happier hand, in after-times, shall raise

Our England to that lofty eminence,

Where she shall stand unrivalled and supreme

Among the Nations.—

For us, this weary pilgrimage is passed.

Farewell, my valiant countrymen !

Let England's dangers claim your instant care.

Morcar, we charge thee—But 'tis too late—

Save, save our country !

[Dies.]

MORCAR. There fled the soul and spirit of this realm !

Convey the bodies hence, that we may pay
Those honours, which our present means allow,
In dear memorial of our love.

An adverse fate bears heavily upon us :
Our civil tumults, and the State's corruptions,
Have roused offended Heaven.

But let our warriors hasten to avenge
Those losses we deplore, or bravely perish
With England's liberties.

The patriot ne'er, by abject fear subdued,
Despairs of guarding still the public weal ;
But when rude tempests shake the labouring state,
Firm at his post, he braves th' impending fate,
Shares the proud triumph, or in the shock o'erthrown,
His country's destiny he makes his own.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

THE END.

C A M O E N S,

A Tragedy.

BY

H. ST. G. TUCKER, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON ANTONIO VASQUEZ DE GAMA,	Viceroy of Goa.
DON FRANCISCO LOPEZ	Commandant at Goa.
FERDINAND	his Son.
CAMOENS.	
FIDELIO	a Boy, Pupil of Camoens.
IGNATIO LOPEZ	Head Inquisitor at Goa.
PERREIRA	} Officers of the Inquisition.
RODRIQUES	
PASCAL	Steward of Don Antonio.
PEDRO	Servant of ditto.
GOMEZ	Servant of Francisco.

Guests, Officers, Guards, &c.

W O M E N.

DONNA AMBROSIA DE GAMA	Wife of Don Antonio.
THEODORA.....	her Daughter.
CLARA	her Niece.
BIANCA	her Servant.

C A M O E N S.



A C T I.



S C E N E I.

CAMOENS on a Sofa, reading.

Enter FIDELIO.

CAM. DIDST thou recite the sonnet which I gave thee,
With voice attuned to sweetest melody,
And all the grace and ornament
Which thy best skill could lend ?

FID. Whate'er from bounteous Nature I derive,
With all that I may boast of tuneful art,
Was freely used to give thy verse
Its utmost charm.

CAM. What said the lovely Clara ?

FID. She said, thy lips breathed heavenly inspiration,
She called thee first of mortal poets,
And swore the song might suit the fairest dame,
That e'er, mature in bloom (as erst the warrior maid),
Leapt from a pregnant brow.

CAM. Be serious, Boy—

Did she return no answer ?

FID. None other did she give me.

CAM. Didst thou observe her countenance ?

FID. I marked it well.

CAM. Did it betray no visible emotion ?

FID. Methought it did—

A lambent smile, which spoke nor joy nor grief,
But something balancing between,
Played on her lovely features.

CAM. Thou heedless youth ! Is this the golden fruit
Thy hand obedient should have reached ?

FID. If that my errand did not better speed,
The saints or thy offended stars upbraid.—
Just as fair Clara had composed in haste
Some slight disorder in her flowing tresses,
And seemed to ruminate some special grace,
We heard at hand the Lady Theodora.

CAM. Unlucky chance !

FID. She then abrupt dismissed thy embassy,
And wanting other means to do it honour,
Cupid's credentials gently placed
In her soft heaving bosom.

CAM. She then did consecrate the poor oblation
On that fair shrine, which graceful modesty
Still veils from every eye profane—
That shrine, the seat of some mysterious power
Which rules the instinctive sense—
That wondrous mould of fair proportions,

Where Nature's hand, in brief epitome,
Hath summed up all the noted principles
Of beauty and perfection !

FID. The day is now far spent—

Wilt thou not, then, my gentle master, tune the lyre,
And raise thy voice, as thou art wont,
To sing the wonders of creation ?

CAM. No ! good Fidelio—Sweet music now

Would find no chord responsive—
The loitering sun, in this our torrid region,
Protracts his reign ; and the incumbent air,
Surcharged with sluggish vapour, doth oppress
Those spirits, which subdued, leave our weak frame
Inert and robbed of all its energies—
Immortal man thus sees his nobler quality
Quenched and subdued by drowsy vapour !

FID. Sure, thou art not well !

Thy looks bespeak thee faint and weary—
Forbid not that I haste to bring
Needful refreshment.

CAM. I would not have thee, dear Fidelio—

This mortal frame is a rude shell
Of mean account. The mind, that precious gem within,
Alone demands our care—
Pry'thee, leave me—
Go and enjoy thy state of innocence,
While I indulge in meditation here,
And study to compose unsettled thoughts.

FID. Farewell, my kindest master ! [*Exit FIDELIO.*]

Enter FERDINAND.

CAM. Ha ! Ferdinand, my friend ! I joy to see thee—

Most welcome to thy household gods !

FERD. I do rejoice to see thee, Camoens—

A month's short absence has contrived

To make me here a stranger—

Tell me in simple prose what fashion wears the time.

Thou art dejected ! Say, what labouring thoughts

Disturb thy philosophic humour—

Is Theodora well ?

CAM. Her health is good, I do believe ;

But, Ferdinand, my hopes in her are dead !

FERD. That cannot I believe.

She loves thee, Camoens.

CAM. Still that has not advanced my suit—

In brief, her heart my own, I sought her hand ;

But good Antonio, with a father's voice,

Condemned my bold pretension.

I do reproach me that this heedless hand

Hath given a fatal wound—

When first I dared invoke her in my song,

She was the idol of creative fancy—

My sportive muse then urged a wanton suit

Where passion only should have pleaded—

But passion followed, and the train of ills

Which now distract me.

FERD. But still, possessed of Theodora's heart,

You may defy a father's power.

CAM. Not so ! To good De Gama I owe much,
And 'twere a sin most foul, by treacherous means,
To rob him of his treasure.

The good old man, still willing to disarm
An act ungracious of its poignant sting,
Hath offered me his niece, the lovely Clara.

FERD. How dost thou stand affected ?

CAM. My soul revolted at the treason ;
But better thoughts have since prevailed.
It were some comfort that, without offence,
I might to Theodora tender still
A brother's love.

FERD. Thy state would be most dangerous !

CAM. I hope, not so—Since reason I have known,
It has my constant study been
To discipline my heart.
I think with safety I could trust myself
To live the friend of one I still hold dear.

FERD. But canst thou fashion so thy love,
That Clara may ascend the vacant throne
With all a sovereign's rights ?

CAM. I have addressed a sonnet to her beauty.
The maid is gentle, kind, and fair ;
And love, with skilful husbandry,
Will soon put forth its blossoms.
With Theodora love is a rude storm
Which hurries on the light unsteady bark,
Now borne aloft on the ascending surge,

As it would kiss the azure canopy—
Now headlong plunged into the gaping void,
At mercy of the vast o'erhanging flood !
With lovely Clara 'tis a summer gale,
Which gently undulates the fair expanse,
Nor frets the bosom of the deep !

FERD. I fear the gale of friendship will so rage,
That gentle Clara, with her summer breeze,
Must fly before it.

CAM. I would not do the maid injustice.

FERD. But what says Theodora to the project ?

CAM. I dare not think.

I have not courage to explain myself.
I'd stand the mark of twenty cannon balls
Sooner than meet the anger of her eye—
She knows her present destination.
Yes, Ferdinand ! 'Tis thy most happy lot
To form the happiness of Theodora.

FERD. What say you, Camoens ?

Thou wouldst not sure deceive me !

CAM. No ! by our friendship I protest,
I have the word of good De Gama's self—
He destines thee her hand—
And though I own some pang it cost me,
I can rejoice to see a friend's success.

FERD. This cannot be,
She will o'errule her father's purpose.
And more, it wounds my heart to tell thee,

Francisco ne'er will give consent.
I grieve to think my father and my friend
Should both prove rivals here.

CAM. How! fear a rival in Francisco!
This is a phantom of thy own creation!
In thy well-ordered bosom ne'er allow
A thought to move injurious to a parent.
FERD. It is most true. He has professed himself
A suitor for her hand.

CAM. Then let it pass—the arrow cannot hit—
The ardent Theodore will never barter
That matchless prize, her hand, for rank and wealth,
Enlisted in the service of old age.
Stand thou aloof; and his discomfiture
Shall raise no blush to thy reproach.

FERD. My hopes are slight—th' impassioned Theodore
Will never own a second love.

CAM. To wean her love, I purpose to assume
A studied coldness, foreign to my heart,
Which more than reason or authority
Will undermine her warm affections.
But see, she comes this way—
Haste, haste, and leave me, Ferdinand!
I would make trial of my strength alone.

FERD. Then fare thee well—and if thou win,
I hope to claim the stake.

[*Exit* FERDINAND.]

CAM. I dread this interview——

I am perplexed, and want that confidence
Which rectitude should give.——

Enter THEODORA.

THEOD. Musing, my Camoens !

Thou art become a stranger to my sight,
And much, I fear, a stranger, too, to love.

CAM. Believe it not, most beauteous Theodore——

This heart, perhaps, has been too much a slave
To love's supreme dominion.

THEOD. Then wherefore hast thou shunned me ?

CAM. The duty which I owe fair Theodora

For ever binds me to her service.

THEOD. Talk not of duty—'tis no friend to love.

CAM. My gratitude will live while I myself endure.

THEOD. Thy gratitude !

CAM. What nobler feelings can the bosom warm

Than those which spring from gratitude !

'Tis gratitude which gives a healthful impulse

To all the various movements of the soul——

'Tis gratitude which purifies the mind

From every selfish base affection :

Which still diffusing mutual benefits,

Unites mankind in harmony and love.

'Tis the just principle of human conduct——

'Tis the endearing tie which gives to love,

To love itself, it's constancy and ardour.

THEOD. Thou ne'er hast known the passion, Camoens.

Celestial love disdains this poor associate—

I ask thy heart, and not thy gratitude.

CAM. That love which may become my modest state,

Nor wrong thy dignity and high pretension,

I long have cherished.——

THEOD. I ne'er have known a difference of state—

'Tis love's delightful privilege

To banish false distinctions—

It glories to cast off the pride of rank—

Love elevates the heart, and forms the lowly peasant

Companion for the throne.

CAM. Thy generous nature would forget

Whate'er should give thee just pre-eminence—

But may I claim the pledge of partial friendship,

With injury to her who nobly gave it?

I know thy honoured sire will ne'er consent

That thou, the idol of paternal fondness,

Shouldst sacrifice a brilliant destiny

To one, the sport of fortune.

THEOD. Love is the paradise of my existence—

I live but to obey his heavenly law—

The world and all its splendour I resign,

Content with thee to share a wilderness!

CAM. May I permit th' unwary sacrifice?

Does not the sacred voice of honour,

And every feeling which should sway the heart,

Command that I resist this self-devotion?

THEOD. Art thou sincere or generous, Camoens ?

Beware ! I yet will penetrate the mystery—
This sudden coldness needs must have a cause—
Reflect ! I claim sincerity and truth,
The bond of confidence—if thou deceive me,
Though I have loved with wild enthusiasm,
I can throw off my fetters, and exchange
The noblest passion for a woman's hate.

CAM. Stay, Theodora ! [THEODORA *going*.

For worlds I would not wound that generous spirit.

THEOD. What wouldst thou ? wouldst pity me ?

Nay, then I scorn thy pity—

Farewell ! But yet remember !

[*Exit* THEODORA.

CAM. This will distract me—

I must appease the sudden fury—
Her love should win more dear regard—
Have I pursued the path which virtue points at ?
If so, what means this inward keen reproach ?
Ingenuous truth should mark our every action ;
And he who deviates from its just law,
So plain, so uniform, resigns, without excuse,
The fairest attribute of virtue.

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter PASCAL and PEDRO.

PASCAL. Friend Pedro, thou must use thy utmost skill
To do thyself and me some present honour—
See that thy arrangements all
Be correspondent to the occasion—
Let nought be wanting which may yet conduce
To give our present entertainment
A suitable magnificence.
This annual festival to grace,
We must devise some rare and striking novelty.

PEDRO. I shall not fail to pluck the fruit of knowledge;
But much I fear the weighty charge
Thy wisdom would impose—I lack experience.

PASCAL. Fear not, success shall not elude thy grasp.

PEDRO. I have a just ambition.

PASCAL. 'Tis well, and it shall serve—

To-morrow's dawn shall see fair Theodora
Complete full twenty summers—a gracious lady!
The pride and hope of great De Gama's house!
Her heart as warm—her hand as free
As Angel's ministering charity.

PEDRO. She is a rare accomplished lady.

PASCAL. She is, indeed. Oh, how I love her!

And when a child, to gratify her fancy,

How oft I chased the simple butterfly !
 But let that pass—we must to business.
 De Gama now, who lives but in this maid,
 Hath given strict command that we prepare
 To welcome this fair day of jubilee,
 With royal pomp and more than Eastern splendour.

PEDRO. Our books I will consult, and all which taste
 Or fancy can inspire, shall be combined
 To give thee satisfaction.

PASCAL. 'Tis bravely said.—But come, the time is short ;
 And we must hasten to our labours,
 For diligence should still outstrip th' emergence.
 The faithful Isidore, whom now we mourn,
 Would have conceived some notable device
 Appropriate to the occasion.

PEDRO. He was, indeed, remarkable for just conceits.

PASCAL. Peace to his shade !—But to our work.

PEDRO. I will attend thee, noble Pascal.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Public Walk in Goa.

Enter CAMOENS and FRANCISCO, meeting.

FRAN. Well met, thou prince of poets !
 This is a chance, for which we thank
 Divine Apollo.

CAM. Excuse me, Signor ;

Some urgent cares which touch me nearly
Forbid my tarrying here.

FRAN. How, man, desert the Muses ?

We have rich treasures for thy critic ear—
This poem, which my Muse would consecrate
To beauteous Theodore, thou must rehearse.

CAM. Spare me, noble Signor—some moments hence

We shall command more happy leisure.

FRAN. Nay, thou must read—'tis bare ten thousand lines—

I tell thee, Camoens, that I adore
The haughty Theodora, whose proud heart
By cunning skill I trust to conquer ;
And I have so contrived in this my verse
T' infuse the poison of rare flattery,
That to resist the charm, she must be more than woman.

CAM. Methinks, young Ferdinand might rather aim

At this high mark.

FRAN. How, Ferdinand, my son ?

A boy—a beardless boy !——
Thou'rt mad, most worthy Camoens.
He is too forward for so green a youth.
It would become thy friendship to instil
More sober counsel.

For him we other views propose.—

But come, peruse my verse— (Gives the MS.)

My scheme runs briefly thus——

I feign that Nature formed a peerless maid

T' expose for once before our mortal eyes
The beauty of Immortals.

CAM. The poet doubtless may assign
To his fair mistress, tho' of mortal birth,
An origin divine.

FRAN. The thought is novel and original.
Read on—read on.

CAM. These words and images, methinks,
Are somewhat too familiar.
The Gods should speak and act like Gods,
And our stern critics will expect from them
A loftier carriage—a dignity sustained.

FRAN. Psha !—What is dignity ?
'Tis but a dress at best,
A rich embroidered buskin !

CAM. 'Tis an ætherial essence—a heavenly emanation,
A pure atmosphere, surrounding
Objects of high moral excellence,
Imparting lustre—elevation !

FRAN. Friend Camoens, thou dost ascend above the sky !
Why, man, I do not paint an atmosphere—
I follow Nature.

CAM. But the chaste Muse forbids a tone of levity.

FRAN. How now ? I do protest 'tis good to laugh ;
All pleasurable feeling stirs the blood,
And gives a healthy temper to the soul.
Read—read—See how I paint fair Theodora—
The picture will delight thee, Camoens.

(*Camoens reads.*)

“ Her eye more bright than streams of light
“ Descending from the moon at night ;
“ More bright than sparkling diamonds, set
“ In rings of ebony or jet ;
“ Her ivory teeth a silver lustre shed,
“ Like pearls reposing in a coral bed ;
“ While playful rubies form the mouth divine,
“ Where smiles and gentle thoughts their tender shoots
entwine.”

FRAN. True Alexandrine, by my faith !

Smooth and majestic as the silver swan,
Which courses down the glassy stream serene.
Three kingdoms we exhaust in metaphor,
And motion, feeling, and expression give
To things inanimate,
How now ! What sayest thou, Camoens ?

CAM. Thy verse would need some large reform

T’ approve it worthy of the muse,
But that thou couldst with one most simple fancy
Engross some thousand lines, must needs excite
Our admiration.

FRAN. Not so—not so. I have a fund of matter ;

For genius, working like the skilful worm,
Converts the worthless leaf into a silken thread.
This fiction wrought to its just end,
I then discourse of Draca’s cruel law,
Of Solon and Lycurgus, famed of old,

And tell how I, with better skill, could mend
Their faulty institutes.

I next on politics descant—on history and logic—
And to conclude, with a concealed and caustic irony,
I stigmatise the Holy Inquisition.

CAM. Were it not rash to brave the holy office?
Can stately science aptly be enrolled
To swell the pageant in a love song?

FRAN. Psha! psha! Thou hast not craft to penetrate
The deep contrivance of my muse;
'Tis fit I shew the various learning I possess.
And when I satirize the knave in power,
I would assert a bold and manly freedom.
Teach but unthinking woman to admire
Thy wit, thy gallantry, and spirit,
And thou shalt melt the winter's snow
On chaste Diana's bosom.

CAM. This is most credible—but yet thy satire
May breed some present danger.

FRAN. Regard it not. Why, man, I am a soldier!
The lash, I say, must be applied.
We must have satire—pungent, biting satire—
Such is the vile condition of our nature,
Such our depraved and vicious appetites,
No other food will suit our palsied taste.
'Tis true, I have addressed my verse
To Theodore, by special application:
But still I write for the whole universe.

I tell thee, friend, this poem was conceived
Ere Theodora saw the light of Heaven.

CAM. I will believe it.

Farewell, illustrious Signor ;
At some convenient hour I will peruse
Thy motley verse ; and thou thereon shalt know
My honest sentiment.

FRAN. Wait, wait to see how we conclude.

CAM. It is impossible. Farewell.

[*Exit CAMOENS.*]

FRANCISCO, *solus*

FRAN. 'Tis envy ! envy all !

I watched his restless, varying countenance,
And his uneasy looks too plain betrayed
The jealous humour of a rival.
I marked his strange impatience to depart.
What if he steal my best and favourite thoughts !
No, no—the man is honest, though a poet,
And ever hath maintained a fair repute.
But yet I do suspect he loves fair Theodore,
And he may secretly bestow my verse
To aid his bold pretension ;
Well, we must now prepare to grace
Th' approaching festival ;
For woman's undistinguishing caprice
Must still be cheated with a rich exterior.
Art shall arrest the march of surly Time,

That fearful and insidious foe of man !
In dress unequalled, witty, gay, and bold,
No blemish seen to tell that I am old ;
The veteran's skill shall youthful strength impart,
And plant Love's standard in the proudest heart.

[*Exit.*

A C T II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter THEODORA and FIDELIO, meeting.

THEOD. Whither so fast, Fidelio?

FID. Within this hour thy guests will sure assemble,
And I would seek the pensive Camoens,
Who else, absorbed in philosophic dreams,
May not give heed to other purpose.

THEOD. This well explains thy parting hence,
But not thy coming hither.

FID. I fain would view the busy scene,
And gratify my wondering fancy
With these thy splendid decorations,

THEOD. Some nearer purpose, too, thou hadst in view—
Tell me thy errand, dear Fidelio—
I owe thee much for services remembered,
And more for thy unceasing love—
This little purse, which my own hand hath wrought,
Thou must accept in token of my friendship.

FID. This charming purse most dearly I should tender,
But that the gold within might give
To my regard a sordid base complexion,

THEOD. But, then, this little ring thou wilt preserve—
See how it fits the pretty hand.

FID. Oh! 'tis a lovely jewel!

Forgive me, gentle lady, for I may not wear
So rare a gem.

THEOD. Nay, but thou must—'tis a mere bauble!
Sure thou wilt wear some pledge of my regard—
Mark the rich hue! this colour, dear Fidelio,
We maids esteem, for 'tis the emblem true
Of constancy!

FID. 'Tis beautiful! how may I dare possess
A gem so precious!

THEOD. 'Tis nought; but it becomes the hand,
And when, perchance, it meets thy wandering eye,
Thou must remember Theodora.

FID. I am for ever bound unto her service.

THEOD. Come, let me hear thee sing, Fidelio—
It seems a tedious age since I enjoyed
The music of that voice.
Thou must indulge me with one little song—
That tender air which late my Camoens
Composed.

FID. Excuse me, dearest lady,
I dare not do what might offend.

THEOD. Thou canst not say the song was ne'er composed,
And songs are written to be sung.

FID. Thy pardon, gentle lady!
I dare not utter ought remote from truth,
And to confess the truth might wound my duty.

THEOD. I may not be denied—thou must, Fidelio—

That little song ! that tender air !

A kiss, I swear, shall tell my obligation.

FID. I dare not disobey ; but yet my heart,

Full of strange tremours, tells me I do wrong.

FIDELIO *sings*.

1.

The self-consuming lamp declines
As night slow-wasting glides away ;
And yet at morn's approach repines,
It dies amid the glare of day.

2.

So in thy absence, lovely maid,
Consuming cares my heart oppress ;
Pensive I seek the silent glade,
And to the groves my plaints address.

3.

Yet when that lovely form appears,
And blushing charms successive rise,
My heart betrays a thousand fears :
I dread the dart from Clara's eyes.

THEOD. Monster ! perfidious and ungrateful !

FID. Oh ! how have I offended ?

THEOD. Revenge inspire my just resolve !

Come deadly hate, and from this injured heart
Tear the false idol of its worship !

FID. Oh say, dear lady, how I may deserve
Thy blessed forgiveness !

THEOD. Peace, thoughtless child !

Oh ! 'tis a mortal pang !

The base deceit—the foul ingratitude !

Oh ! how it presses on this heart !

Nay, but Fidelio, do not heed

This burst of passion—

Yes ! 'tis a deadly wrong !

Leave me—I will be pacified—

This passion is the mind's infirmity ;

It will soon vanish like a summer cloud—

I shall be well—say not that thou hast seen

This sudden weakness—adieu, Fidelio :

Forget what thou hast seen.

FID. The heavens preserve thee, dearest lady—

My duteous love shall show in my obedience.

[*Exit FIDELIO.*]

THEOD. Oh ! I abhor the false ungrateful race !

Prompt my designs, ye fiends of vengeance !

Oh let some scourge convert this earth,

This peopled orb, into a frightful waste !

Enter FERDINAND.

FERD. Why thus estranged, most beauteous Theodora ?

The festive throng, deprived of those sweet smiles,

Which should diffuse their genial influence,

Are sad, and seem bereft of all

Which might bespeak a state of animation.

THEOD. I have been thinking, if this goodly throng
Might, for a wonder, show one heart unstained
With falsehood and ingratitude !

FERD. We should account the wonder, if on earth
That heart were found, which could be false
To lovely Theodora.

THEOD. Oh ! this is wicked pleasantry ! I do forget—
Thou art of this assembled multitude.

FERD. The constant love which I so long have borne,
Unconquered by neglect or proud disdain,
Should teach thee thy injustice.

THEOD. Love ! thou art a stranger to the passion !
'Tis not for base inconstant man to know it !

FERD. If to adore the object of my wishes—
To have no thought, which bears not her loved image ;
No taste of joy where she is not the source—
If envying e'en the dull and senseless clod,
On which a transient smile unconscious beams—
If to endure the anguish of despair,
The cheerless gloom of hope extinct,
When banished from her presence,—
To feel the bliss of angels, when allowed
To breathe the pure soft air which she respires ;
T' approach the living form, to catch the genial glow—
Oh ! painful ecstasy !——
If to feel thus be any proof of love,
Then have I known the heavenly inspiration !

THEOD. What wouldst thou do to serve thy mistress ?

FERD. Lay down my life a willing sacrifice——

My happiness I place in her regard,
And to deserve her slightest favour,
There is no aim, within our mortal compass,
Which I would not adventure.

THEOD. Nay, these are words—in very act and deed
What wouldst thou do ?

FERD. Obey the very starts of her caprice,
If to obey were sure destruction.

THEOD. Then quick destroy the hated Camoens.

FERD. The Gods forbid ! My friend !

The man on earth whom I most dearly tender !

THEOD. Ha ! ha ! thou miracle of love's heroic rage !

FERD. Thou wouldst make trial of my honour——
Long have I known that favoured Camoens
In thy regard stands enviably distinguished.

THEOD. I hate the monster !

Thy friend ! the just, the generous Camoens !
Oh ! I do love these paragons of friendship.

FERD. This is the sudden flow of passion ;
But soon, with its own violence exhausted,
The current will resume its wonted channel.

THEOD. The man on earth most dearly tendered !
He who, disparaging thy better worth,
Would rob thee of the object of thy choice !

FERD. This cannot be—I know him well.

An open and a generous rivalry
We have maintained, still blameless in its course ;

But that, by secret means, he should essay
To wrong me where my every hope must center,
Were baseness, so detestable and foul,
The mind revolts and may not give it faith.

THEOD. Fear never wants some specious argument
To palliate its weakness.

Thy friend is brave, and hath approved himself,
(Albeit wanting every other virtue,)
A gallant soldier.

Might Theodora claim your sex's privilege,
She ne'er had sought another champion.

FERD. Could I an instant pause from abject fear,
I were the scorn of manhood.

THEOD. My father's slave would do as much
At my command.—

But I am wrong—
Friendship should have precedence still of love;
And if the object be ingrate and false,
Our constancy shall shew more admirable.

FERD. Could I believe him false !—

THEOD. Wherefore believe ? In Theodora's wrongs
Wherein stands Ferdinand affected ?

FERD. Could I be backward to avenge her wrongs,
I justly should deserve this harsh reproof.

THEOD. If man might dare avenge his injuries,
The world would know no outrage.

FERD. I dare avenge thy injuries—
Command my ready sword.

THEOD. I now perceive the noble Ferdinand !

FERD. But it must be by honourable means—

I will provoke him to the field.

THEOD. Not so—thou shalt not match thy fairer hopes

'Gainst his unworthiness—

Some better means my prudence shall devise,

That thy good service, at convenient season,

May safely minister to my revenge.

FERD. This wrings cold blood from my revolting heart !

THEOD. Nay, then, if thou repent, 'tis well.—

Thus have I known a bold ambitious spirit

Clamber the lofty precipice,

And when th' adventurous wretch hath seen

The perils he had passed, with horror palsied,

The very shade and picture of his danger

Hath sent him reeling to the gulph below !

Why should I court thy languid service ?

A woman's hand may justly vindicate

A woman's wrongs.

FERD. Thou shalt command me—

I have no will, no sense or being,

But as thy breath inspires.

THEOD. Soft—they do perceive us—

But more we will discourse at leisure.

Put on those smiles, which should become

The temper of this festival.—

Enter CAMOENS and CLARA.

CAM. Thy guests would fain indulge in gay carousal ;
But while fair Theodore denies her presence,
We lack the vital spring of our enjoyment.
The clouds which hover o'er the path of morn,
Thus darkly shew, till its benignant rays
Pierce the dull mass, and give to shapeless vapour
Aërial forms, beaming celestial radiance !

THEOD. Can he, th' inspired of heaven, whose plastic mind
Hath power to raise a living world around him,
Who soars beyond the regions of creation,
Whose genius holds all nature in its grasp,
Can he demand the aid of female spells ?
By what enchantment may a simple maid
Inspire that life and animation
Herself hath never known ?

CAM. The sun, fair Theodore, may yet remain
Unconscious of that genial heat
Which animates all nature.

CLARA. But, truly, Theodore, thou art expected—
The good Antonio some impatience shews
That thou hast not done honour to his guests.

THEOD. We will attend, for to these gallant sirs,
'Tis fit a maid, who would their suffrage win,
Make shew of her obedience—
Come, dearest Ferdinand, and join the festive band.

[Exeunt THEODORA and FERDINAND.]

CAM. "Come, dearest Ferdinand!"—

'Twas so, or I do dream !

Now this should stamp the very print of happiness,

And loose the knot of my perplexity !

And yet 'tis strange !—so sudden too !

But wherefore this disturbance ?

Why cannot I, who urge another suit,

Witness unmoved the loss of her affection ?

CLARA. When thou hast finished thy soliloquy,

Perchance neglected Clara may awake

Some passing charity.

CAM. I do implore forgiveness—

And yet, 'tis strange !—

CLARA. 'Tis strange indeed !

Art thou on earth, or dost thou scan the heavens ?

You poets soar beyond our mortal ken—

But, prythee, Camoens, descend awhile,

And hold discourse in human fashion.

CAM. Didst thou remark the strangeness in their looks ?

CLARA. What woman e'er remarks another's feature,

Unless it be to challenge some defect ?

CAM. Her beauty is most perfect.

CLARA. Is this the way to court a woman's favour ?

Hast thou discovered that a rival's praise

Is wont to charm our pleased imaginations ?

CAM. Thou art superior to thy sex's failing.

CLARA. Preposterous ! I swear I am a woman,

And will assert a woman's privilege—

Thou must pay homage to my beauty ;
Caress and flatter me, and sweetly soothe,
With gentle blandishments, my wayward humour—
In each defect thou must espy a virtue ;
In every fantasy a grace—Do this,
Or by Diana's darkest frown I vow,
Thou ne'er shalt call thyself a slave of mine.

CAM. I would not do thee this injustice—
I ever was sincere—the trick of flattery
To me is yet unknown.

CLARA. Thou must in haste acquire it—
Sincerity is dulness—oft impertinent ;
Beware how thou espouse this antiquated virtue.

CAM. I do esteem it the eternal rock
On which to build the moral character.

CLARA. Ridiculous ! wilt thou discourse of morals,
When thy impassioned love, like some volcano,
Should blaze forth burning sighs, and vows, and oaths,
As plenteous as the cinders of Vesuvius ?

CAM. True love will act a more exalted part.

CLARA. Then I'll have none of it !
I will go find some livelier suitor,
Or die for very sadness—
Adieu, my moral Camoens ! [Exit CLARA.

CAM. Nay, I must follow thee, for I have much to say,
If I could give to my bewildered thoughts
That form and just consistency
Which reason should impress. [Exit.

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter FRANCISCO.

FRAN. Curse on this monstrous cookery !

What mortal e'er beheld a consummation .

So damnably preposterous !

Oh ! my vexed stomach speaks the dire confusion !

That Spartan broth and that Athenian paste

Will be the death of me !

Mad innovation will deform the state !

This Camoens, too, doth vex my very soul—

My poem he withholds, and 'tis some doubt

If, wanting this auxiliary, my suit shall speed

With haughty Theodora—

'Tis ever thus when we consult a friend—

The work is lost, mislaid, perhaps purloined ;

And if it chance t'escape some rude disaster,

The beauties felt, he will not dare admire,

Till sanctioned by the general sentiment ;

Or if some tardy praise we may extort,

With cautious balancing 'tis qualified—

As thus—" The lines are well, and ought to please ;

But yet the world is captious in its taste."

Something is wrong, which may not be described ;

And so, perchance, if that the work miscarry,

These critics hold an ample reservation—

And then we hear of wondrous prophecies—
How this was first foretold—that clearly shewn,
And the rash author cautioned of his danger.
Commend me to this craft of criticism !
These teasing thoughts do sorely aggravate
The natural ill of this consuming clime !
I must uncase me ere I do expire—
How now ! this harness is from Vulcan's forge !
Bring me a hatchet, for no mortal hand
Shall e'er unhinge this rigid panoply !

*Enter ANTONIO, AMBROSIA, THEODORA, FERDINAND,
CLARA, CAMOENS, and GUESTS.*

ANTON. Again, my gentle friends, we bid kind welcome—
Let this auspicious day be fairly spent
In mirth and jocund revelry—
Let music breathe its softest melodies
To bring a sweet refreshment to the soul—
Let the brisk dance enliven our dull spirits ;
The young shall need no prompting to the sport,
And we, whom Time's keen sickle has disabled,
Shall still enjoy the picture of past pleasures.
In faith, this day which gave my Theodore birth,
Renews my span of life, and to these limbs imparts
Some portion of gay youth's elastic spring.
What says our noble guest Francisco ?
I've seen the day (alas ! what years have rolled between !)
FRAN. Impertinent ! [*Aside.*

ANTON. I've seen thee, like the dappled antelope,
Bound through the mazes of the dance,
Active and fresh in all the pride of youth.
Those days are passed—but their impression lives
In grateful memory !

FRAN. Curse on these doating recollections ! [*Aside.*
My Lord, 'tis not my fashion to indulge
In vain and idle boastings.
By action best we shew our active spirit,
And this, my present vigour, shall attest
The merits of my boyhood.

ANTON. We justly do esteem them—
And wherefore has our Camoens been silent ?
We miss thy harp, which once, in happier mood,
Was wont to pay a dear and grateful homage
To our loved Theodora.

CAM. Gracious De Gama—oft-times the muse,
When we most earnestly would woo her favour,
Perversely shews herself most coy and backward.

THEOD. False Cameons ! [*Aside.*
My honoured sire—it is the poet's province
To deal in fiction, and with treacherous art
To cheat the sense by flattering tales of falsehood—
To scatter roses with the thorn concealed—
Let us beware such dangerous illusions.

AMBRO. I do suspect that he has changed the theme ;
Or that the pious spirit of devotion
Would lead the pilgrim to another shrine.

What sayst thou, Camoens? what wilt thou give,
If I, a cunning sybil, should engage
To take thy horoscope, and tell
Thy future fortunes?

CAM. Spare me, noble lady!

I will not tempt the fates—
Without the aid of wit or sorcery,
We sometimes may discern a fate unprosperous.

ANTON. But come, my friends, and let the music rouse
Our dormant faculties—
We'll bravely tread the round of pleasure.
Give me thy arm, kind Camoens—
Young Ferdinand lead on.
Come, gentle friends! we lose the precious hours.

[*Exeunt.*]

Manet FRANCISCO, who stops THEODORA.

FRAN. Stay, noble lady!

THEOD. What wouldst thou, Signor?

FRAN. Most rare and matchless lady,

I would a tale of love unfold,
To which I dare intreat
Thy favouring ear.

THEOD. Young Ferdinand? is it not so?

FRAN. Young Ferdinand!—Confusion!

[*Aside.*]

No, gracious lady—'tis I—'tis I myself
Would lay my life and fortunes at your feet.

THEOD. Preposterous!

FRAN. My rich estates are not unworthy of regard—
They all are yours.

THEOD. I want them not.—

FRAN. In my illustrious ancestry

I can count up full fifty generations.

THEOD. Nay, spare thyself and me the trouble.

FRAN. Plague on this Camoens !—

[*Aside.*

If thou wouldst deign, august and lovely Theodore,

To hear a poem which I have composed

In honour of thy beauty,

Something doth whisper that it would attract

Some portion of thy favour.

THEOD. Where is this boasted poem ?

FRAN. Aye, there indeed ! there hast thou touched

A spring which vibrates to my heart—

The jealous Camoens withholds the song ;

But I will snatch it from the perilous jaws

Of Cerberus himself.

Some caution yet must be observed,

For in it I have harshly satirized

The holy Inquisition.

THEOD. What sayst thou ?

Hast thou reviled the holy office ?

FRAN. Aye, with a free and biting satire.

THEOD. Thy poem still bestowed with Camoens ?

FRAN. Aye, most excellent of ladies.

THEOD. This may do much ! I've thought of it before ! [*Aside.*

They long have watched, like hungry alpine wolves,

For this devoted prey ; and the strong hand

Of my benignant father, interposed,

Alone hath saved him from their fangs !
This magazine of fierce combustibles
Wants but a breath !

FRAN. Deign, fairest lady, to give ear

To my most ardent suit.

[*Kneels.*

THEOD. Perchance we may, at more convenient leisure—

Rise, noble Signor. Be thou discreet—

With Camoens be silent—

I will devise some cunning stratagem

To rescue thy lost treasure.

Adieu, noble Francisco.

[*Exit* THEODORA.

FRANCISCO *solus.*

FRAN. “ Perchance we may”—

’Tis doubtful if she love me !

And yet I’ve known a flattering tale

So catch the eager fancy of the sex,

That they have seemed quite fascinate,

Won by a breath !—

But how may I bestow young Ferdinand ?

It is not fitting that this lusty boy,

In growth so strangely premature,

Should haunt the purlieus of a nursery—

Ten years twice told he scarcely yet hath numbered !

There must be something wrong, when boys assume

The port and privilege of manhood !

They chafe and drive us off the stage of life,

Ere we have played our most important parts—

Like to a blight, which sears the ripening corn,
 Ere balmy autumn lend her golden hue—
 Him will I send in haste beyond the seas,
 That he may not impeach our fund of youth.
 This life is full of strange perplexities ;
 Nor is successful love itself exempt from care !
 Man turns his back upon the present hour,
 And eager darts into futurity—
 But when the future comes, 'tis like the past,
 And on we move in search of it again.
 Now, gladly would I know how this my suit
 Is like to speed with captious Theodora ;
 But we must wait the tardy march of Time,
 Nor look for oaks until we plant our acorns—
 Man wisely should enjoy the present hour—
 The future is a dream ! [Exit.]

SCENE III.

Walk in Goa.

Enter CAMOENS.

CAM. 'Tis plain I do not love fair Clara !
 'Tis scarcely doubtful that I still love Theodora !
 But now she shuns—perhaps despises me !
 I cannot bear her hate—still less contempt !

Enter FERDINAND.

CAM. Well, Ferdinand, I see that thou art happy—
Thou hast already won the love of Theodora ;
Nor won it with a labour super-human !
But such is woman's love !—
I did suspect some potent barrier,
Some strong impediment, working delay ;
But, strange to tell ! thou hast with one light bound,
At once o'erleapt the fence !

FERD. Those who look on, will sometimes see the game
Much quicker than the player.

CAM. Nay, but it is most palpable—
It cannot now escape the dullest sense.

FERD. Thy suit, too, shews most prosperous.

CAM. My suit must be withdrawn—
I have involved myself in a strange labyrinth,
And lack the thread of Ariadne !
I am in search of Clara, to disclose
Some portion of my folly.

FERD. What dost thou mean ?

CAM. 'Tis difficult to say—
When we desert the plain and beaten path,
Our steps are all uncertain—
'Tis best to trace them back again.

FERD. Thou wilt not, surely, in this hasty mood,
Determine to reject the hand of Clara ?

CAM. I have determined to be honest—

And if the fates should so decree,

I next determine to be wise hereafter.

FERD. A goodly resolution, if in season.

But whence this hurry to be wise and honest ?

CAM. Why, Ferdinand, already I have trifled

Beyond all moderate allowance—

'Tis time to draw the reins—

Thus far my sins bear no malignant hue :

They sprung from blind and heedless passion ;

But when, of error conscious, still we err,

Our indiscretion takes the stamp of crime.

FERD. This is to be most serious !

Thy present humour shews too grave.

CAM. Not so ! I have been much too light !

If thou shouldst meet the gentle Clara,

Say that, with earnest phrase, I do entreat

An instant's hearing ; and at early dawn

I will attend her at the palace.

With Theodore I claim thy just report—

Instil more kindly thoughts ! What I have done

In her account amiss, that let her goodness pardon.

Farewell ! I'll see thee ere we part.

[*Exit CAMOENS.*]

FERD. This is strange haste ! and something lurks behind

Which I have not the skill to penetrate—

My own estate is not of that high promise

Which should provoke a rival's envy !

For I distrust this sudden change of fancy—
The winds that blow and range the compass round,
Give no true presage to the baffled mariner !
But I must run the course I have begun,
And wait the doubtful issue of events.
When age and wisdom prove uncertain guides,
My youth and inexperience cannot claim
Exemption from the ills of fortune ! [*Exit.*

A C T III.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter THEODORA and BIANCA.

THEOD. Where is my cousin Clara ?

BIAN. Within the hour she left the palace.

THEOD. And when will she return ?

BIAN. She said her absence would be short.

THEOD. Where is she gone ?

BIAN. Of that she made no mention.

But I perceived she bent her steps

Toward the wood which skirts

The garden of the palace.

THEOD. Was she alone—or how accompanied ?

BIAN. The Signor Camoens escorted her.

THEOD. Gone forth alone with Camoens !

Enough—the sword waits but the hand !

Say, I attend my mother's leisure.

BIAN. I will obey.

[*Exit BIANCA.*]

THEODORA *alone.*

THEOD. Ungrateful Clara !

Is thus my constant love returned ?
Is this the friendship we so oft have sworn !—
For thee I foolishly have cherished
More than a sister's fondness !
And oft, when silent midnight should have brought
Her calm and sweet repose, my wandering thoughts
Have sought thee for their object !
In all my happiest dreams thou didst preside ;
And when, perchance, in airy visions lost,
I've fancied one endowed with every grace,
And formed to captivate our youthful hearts,
Then have I felt the glowing pride of friendship !
Then have I said—" He's thine, my Clara,
Though death should seal the fatal sacrifice !"
But hence away ! begone ! for ever from this heart
I tear thy image !

Enter DONNA AMBROSIA.

AMBRO. Good morrow, Theodora !

May the returning sun smile on my child !

THEOD. My gracious mother !

AMBRO. Thy cousin Clara is abroad betimes,
And I suspect on matters of high interest—
If thou hast been her chosen confidant,
Thou hast not, Theodore, betrayed
The secret of thy friend.

THEOD. The secret of my friend !

I own no friend ; nor would I penetrate
Another's secret !

AMBRO. The Signor Camoens of late has shewn
For our loved Clara a most marked regard ;
And he, e'en now, in form and terms unused,
Craved for himself a private hearing—
It cannot be but that this interview
Has for its end the tender of his love.

THEOD. 'Tis well !

AMBRO. 'Tis well, perhaps, my Theodore,
For though not rich, he's nobly born—
Our Clara's fortune does not reach beyond
His moderate condition.

THEOD. Yes ! and their virtues do as well accord !

AMBRO. They are alike esteemed, and justly too,
For qualities most rare and excellent.
Indeed, I once held more than loose suspicion
That Camoens for thee, my Theodore,
Indulged a secret preference ;
And could the daughter of De Gama's house
Have stooped to match on terms unsuitable,
Thy father's voice and mine had free resigned
Our richest jewel to reward his merit.

THEOD. If he could lay a kingdom at my feet,
I'd spurn it from me.

AMBRO. I do believe young Ferdinand will prove
More worthy of thy favour—

He is a youth of high and virtuous promise,
Descended from a noble ancestry,
And heir to all Francisco's vast estates—
Thy father doth approve the choice,
And my consent shall not be slowly given
To crown my Theodora's wishes.

THEOD. Young Ferdinand my choice ! I have no choice,
And never can resolve to change my state.

AMBRO. How, Theodore, not marry ?
Art thou content that great De Gama's house
Should now become extinct and desolate ?
Thou art its sole, its last remaining hope—
The remnant of thy honoured father's days
Of joy no other promise knows than to behold
A cherished offspring.

THEOD. My future life I gladly consecrate
To tend with filial love my parents' welfare,
And soothe each pang of their declining years.

AMBRO. Then why reject young Ferdinand ?

THEOD. A widow doomed ere yet a wife !
And then again to pledge a hand despised !
Oh no !—this were too much !
Life is but short, and, would to heaven ! the span,
Without offence, we might abridge !
Then would I cast the worthless garment off
Which I have worn too long !
Do not entreat me farther to a course,
When to obey were worse than disobedience.

My days, with innocence, I would devote
To prove a daughter's duteous love.

AMBRO. This is some transient fit of passion,
And those mysterious words, whose aim we miss,
I will not now too nicely weigh—
I must attend thy father's summons,
And he some moments hence will be prepared
To have confirmed by word and circumstance
Whate'er in prudence thou canst justly urge
Touching the suit of Ferdinand.

[*Exit AMBROSIA.*

THEOD. I will attend his pleasure.

THEODORA *alone.*

Why should I hesitate so long?
Betrayed by friendship, and by love abjured,
Why should I spare the hateful traitor!
If this much-injured heart must break,
Then let the shock make others tremble!
This scroll shall quench their nuptial fires;
[*Takes a paper from her bosom.*
Or quickly kindle a destructive flame,
Whose rage shall equal the consuming fire
Which burns within me!
Ha! Ferdinand! thou art most welcome.

Enter FERDINAND.

THEOD. Hast thou seen them in thy walk?

FERD. Of whom wouldst thou enquire?
The Signor Camoens, with lovely Clara,
I met, as late I crossed the wood.

THEOD. What said they?—how engaged?
Didst mark their looks?

FERD. He, something disturbed, and all absorbed in thought,
Passed on, nor seemed to heed surrounding objects—
But as with Clara I exchanged in haste
The forms of courtesy prescribed by usage,
Methought I saw the living colour rise,
And flush her varying cheek.

THEOD. The blush of conscious guilt!
I know the source too well—
Too long I've wavered—and this faltering hand
Hath proved a rebel to my purpose—
But now all foolish doubts have vanished,
And injuries, too long and tamely borne,
Have steeled my recreant heart—
This paper to thy care I give in charge,
[Giving it to FERDINAND.]

And ere yon clock can sound another knell,
Commit the scroll portentous to the hands
Of old Ignatio.

FERD. Ignatio, the Inquisitor!
My blood runs chill, as death were in the sound—
Do not, fair Theodora, tempt the fates—
Some ruthless fiends brood o'er the gloomy spot
Where stern Ignatio holds his sable court—
Beware the dangerous place!

THEOD. I fear no danger, as I know no wrong—

My will must be obeyed.

FERD. Say that no injury can spring

From my enforced obedience,

THEOD. I will not deign to hold

Weak parley with suspicion—

Be mine the peril and the shame.

FERD. Give me thy pledge, my honour shall come forth

Unhurt, and free from every stain.

THEOD. 'Tis safe—whate'er the consequence,

I challenge the reproach.

FERD. These strange forebodings warn me to forbear !

What if the fate of gallant Camoens

Hang on this thread ! his image stands before me !

I see his hand outstretched to beckon me away !

Oft has he said—avoid the paths of mystery,

And still thy mind preserve clear from its own reproach.

THEOD. I have no patience for this raving !

If thou wilt raise a phantom to affright

Thy sickly, scared imagination,

A menial shall perform the office.

FERD. Ah ! dearest Theodore, I sought thee here

To plead a lover's suit, and fondly hoped

To gain from thee some pledge of happiness—

Those looks, estranged and wild, speak other passions !

THEOD. Wouldst talk of love to shipwrecked mariners,

Who tremble on the crazy raft,

Waiting destruction !

All times, all seasons may by love be claimed—

Revenge must choose its moment.

FERD. Revenge! oh! let it find no place

In that pure spotless bosom!

THEOD. This is to trifle with my purpose—

I'll hear no more—give back the paper—

Myself shall dare to execute

Whate'er my heart resolves.

FERD. No! if some fearful mine must needs be sprung,

My hand shall bear the torch—

I go at thy command.

[*Exit FERDINAND.*

THEODORA *alone.*

THEOD. He's gone, and I had wished a moment's pause!

Something I would have said—

The arrow once discharged from this rash hand,

Can I arrest its flight in the free air?

Where will this course now lead me?

If he were innocent! Oh, maddening thought!

When darkness draws her ample curtain round,

The path unknown and unexplored

We tread with timid steps,

And fear new dangers in each senseless stone!

I will rush on, and brave whate'er befall!

The bankrupt, when his dearest stake is lost,

May fortune fearlessly defy!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Vestibule of the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter CLARA and CAMOENS.

CAM. I now must leave thee—

Farewell! dear lady.—

CLARA. Nay, but thou must some moments tarry—

My cousin Theodore would ill be pleased

That you should steal away, like one condemned.

CAM. My just design she will approve

When 'tis regarded in the faithful glass

Which reason shall hold up.

CLARA. Thy parting hence abrupt—the end concealed—

All circumstance of just respect o'erlooked,

Must needs give some offence.

CAM. To reign the monarch of a little world,

I would not brave her just displeasure.

CLARA. Give but a moment's pause, and I predict

Some subtle argument she will devise

To shake thy present resolution.

CAM. 'Twere weakness to give countenance to doubts

Which might unsettle my resolve.

CLARA. I've known a look undo more sage resolves

Than thou hast courage to conceive,

Or grace to execute.

CAM. 'Tis therefore I avoid her—

The path of honour lies exposed before me ;

And no relapse of passion shall unhinge
My fixed intent.

CLARA. But why so sudden thy departure ?

CAM. I go to serve my country with my sword—
I go, that those most dear may free enjoy
That blest repose 'tis not my fate to share.

CLARA. We must not, with officious zeal, prescribe
Alike to all the cordial which we prize—
This is the dangerous Empiric's craft—
To thee 'tis health—to her it may impart
A deadly poison—
We cannot shape the course
Which others should pursue to happiness.

CAM. That power whose searching glance pervades all space,
Who sees the secret movements of the soul,
Knows that I tender Theodora's peace
Beyond all earthly good—
Some touch of grief I may bear hence,
But none would leave behind.
Farewell ! and may those angels who protect the good
Spread their celestial wings, and guard from harm,
The dear, the cherished objects whom I leave,
To whom I bid a painful, long adieu !

[*Exit CAMOENS.*

CLARA. Farewell ! but yet, I shrewdly do surmise,
A sigh, a breath may call thee back
To happiness and love.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*A Street or Walk in Goa.**Enter FERDINAND.*

FERD. 'Tis done ! and would it were not done !
Those omens do portend some fatal issue—
A speckled snake lay basking in the sun,
And crossed my path !
Thrice did I stumble ere I reached the gate !
Thrice did the murky owlets shriek aloud
From yon grey dome which darkly frowns
O'er fierce Ignatio's cell !—
But Camoens I see approach—
Shall I avoid him ?

Enter CAMOENS.

CAM. Well met, my Ferdinand !
Once more I wished to greet a brother,
Ere hostile seas and threatening skies
Spread a dark veil between us.
FERD. What dost thou mean ?
Have I betrayed our friendship ?
CAM. No, by my life, thou hast approved thyself
A friend beyond compare—a model true
Of that perfection which we read and dream of ;—
Thou hast endured a rival in thy love,
Unmoved by jealousy or envious hate—

He who, like thee, the little tyrant's self
Can thus subdue, in my esteem stands proudly raised
Above the conqueror of regions !

FERD. This were a balm, if fairly earned ! (*Aside.*)
But praise misplaced, proves to the heart
Not callous grown, a burning cautery !

CAM. And now thou hast obtained thy just reward,
The hand of Theodore—a prize more rich
Than fortune e'er presented as the stake,
For which contending potentates have drawn
Their guilty swords ;
Wear then the precious gem with that true grace
With which 'twas won.

FERD. If that accursed paper has denounced him,
How shall I meet his eye ! (*Aside.*)

CAM. Thou art disturbed ! I see the generous feeling
Which swells within thy bosom—
Thou wouldst not pain a rival !

FERD. This is too much ! Oh ! Camoens, refrain !
Thy friends are false—fly from a secret enemy.

CAM. I ne'er have shunned an enemy—
I tell thee, Ferdinand, when Afric's sons
Came sweeping o'er the plain, a moving cloud,
And threatened to o'erwhelm our feeble host,
(Not such the rude tornado's desolating rage !)
Albeit some moment's tremour seized my frame,
No thought of dastard flight e'er stained my cheek—
And though my youthful sword, then newly girded,

As yet had drank not in the stream of life,
'Twas faithful to my hand—I saw the glorious Cross!
And rushing on the foe, pierced the deep mass,
And grappled with the fiercest infidels!
But it should shame me thus to steal from time
The nothings which lie buried.

FERD. Fly, fly, again I say, this place of danger.

CAM. Though I had thought to-morrow's sun
Had seen me from this shore removed,
I will not go to leave behind
An enemy unsatisfied.

FERD. If thou in act or thought hast given offence,
And roused the guardians of our holy faith,
Depart in haste and save thyself.

CAM. In act I cannot charge myself with aught
Which might offend against our blessed religion.
Our thoughts are not our slavish prisoners,
And mine have oft-times wandered.—
From early youth I loved the paths of knowledge,
And to the shrine of science undertook
A weary pilgrimage. In every study,
Truth was the haven sought—reason the star
I wished to steer by, when those heavenly lights,
To man revealed, shone dimly, or denied
Their guiding influence.
The man who in those circling worlds around us—
Those vast stupendous works of fair creation,
With all its exquisite machinery,

Sees not a God, all-wise, omnipotent,
Is dead to sense ! And he who will not see
In all the fitness of created things—
Their aptitude for use—their just proportion—
Beauty—order—wonderful design,
All formed to charm and elevate the soul !
In these who will not see the source divine
Of infinite beneficence and love,
Is sunk in hopeless ignorance !
That Providence, with reverential awe,
With love and gratitude I have adored !
His sacred ministers I hold revered ;
But zeal intolerant—religious hate—
Hypocrisy that wears the mask of holiness—
Dark superstition—and fanatic rage,
Which quench the charities of human life,
I hold abhorrent, and have freely censured.

FERD. Thou hast condemned thyself'—

What was the destined voyage thy hints e'en now disclosed
That thou didst meditate?

CAM. I purposed to embark some hours hence
On board the gallant fleet, sent forth to curb
The barbarous pirates who infest the seas,
Enslave or massacre our citizens,
And fright our peaceful commerce from its haunts.

FERD. I will go with thee.

I blush to think my sword is yet unstained !
This is a righteous cause—the temper of my mind—

The time and circumstances all agree—

I will embark and share thy dangers !

CAM. This cannot be !—

Thou hast more urgent duties to perform—

How ! go forth a bridegroom to be slaughtered !

Thou art betrothed, and Theodora claims

Thy future care—Francisco, too, demands

A just obedience to a father's will.

With me, this earth is but an empty desert,

Which I may traverse still, by all unheeded !

I ne'er have known a father's cheering smile,

A father's guiding hand !

My sword is all the fortune I may boast ;

My life my sole possession,

And that I owe my country !

FERD. By Heaven and all the saints I swear,

I will be thy companion in these dangers !

My father will not long oppose my wish,

And Theodore is a reluctant bride !

CAM. This grieves me much !

But first Francisco's free assent obtain—

Our preparation shall not wear the time—

A soldier's wants are few ! Farewell—

At evening I will meet thee at the port.

FERD. I will attend thee there—

Till then, farewell !

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV.

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter THEODORA and CLARA, meeting.

CLARA. Why hast thou shunned me, dearest Theodore?

THEOD. I shun the serpent which would sting me—

I loath all falsehood and ingratitude !

CLARA. These words are harsh, to one who loves thee.

THEOD. I do disclaim thy love, as I abhor deceit !

CLARA. This is a cruel taunt ! I ne'er have wronged

Our constant friendship.

THEOD. Away ! I cannot bear thy sight !

CLARA. Unjust, unkind, an orphan thus to wound !

What have I done ? I swear thou art deceived—

Unkindness easily may drive me hence ;

But thou too soon shalt know thy own injustice !

THEOD. An orphan ! when has Theodora sought

To force the tear into an orphan's eye ?

I loved thee as my sister.

CLARA. And so thou must do still—

I know the spring of this unkindness—

In me of late thou hast perversely seen

A rival in thy love—but much you wrong me ;

For Camoens no interest I own

Which thou wouldst not approve—I've told thee oft,

And told thee true, if one on earth I e'er preferred

Beyond all other men, 'twas Ferdinand.

THEOD. Would that I might believe thee true !

CLARA. And wherefore doubt my truth ?

If Camoens some strange fantastic dress,
To please an idle fancy hath put on,
What share had Clara in the grave offence ?
'Twas but a slight caprice—a fleeting dream,
Which his awakened sense at once dispelled—
He loves thee, Theodore, with passion loves thee.
I can attest his truth.

THEOD. If he be true, what have I done !

CLARA. If he a cold and measured port hath borne,
To cloak the feelings which his heart avows,
'Twas honour urged the change.—
His suit thy parents would not countenance,
And he, reluctant, hath resigned in thee
His fond, his dearest hope.

THEOD. Wretch that I am ! Oh, guilty Theodora !

CLARA. And ere the day decline, he will embark
On that proud fleet, whose streamers float aloft
In silken waves, o'ershadowing the crowded haven.
He goes to meet a savage enemy,
With purpose never to return—
To thee he bade me bear a long, a last farewell !

THEOD. This darts like lightning through my brain !

What have I done ! haste, haste to save him !
They will not dare attempt his precious life !
My father's hand shall snatch him from their grasp—
Fly, fly to Ferdinand—and bid him hold

His fatal hand—Give me the eagle's wing !
Oh ! save my Camoens, and rescue Theodore
From quick destruction !

CLARA. What means this sudden gust of passion ?
Explain thyself, dear Theodore,
And Clara will lay down her life to serve thee.

THEOD. Kind, kind and matchless Clara !
The time will not allow for words—
Haste thou to Ferdinand, and bid him pause—
The paper that I gave him, all is false—
Most false and mischievous—
I fly to stern Ignatio—
If he to glut his rage a victim claim,
That victim be the wretched Theodore.

[*Exit* THEODORA.]

CLARA. Poor frantic Theodora !
How much I pity thy distraction !
Unhappy Camoens ! Thy virtues bloom,
But scattered loosely o'er a soil ingrate,
This storm shall blast them ere mature the fruit !
So fades the gorgeous flower which blows in darkness,
Ere yet the sun pour forth his flood of light.
To give full lustre to its beauties—
I must away to Ferdinand.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

An Apartment in Francisco's House.

Enter FRANCISCO and FERDINAND.

FRAN. Come hither, Ferdinand—

I would with thee some private converse—
Thou art, my boy, advancing fast to manhood,
And knowledge should complete the perfect man—
’Tis knowledge marks the true distinctive line
Between the peasant and the gentleman—
And knowledge must be sought in foreign travel.
’Tis fit we view the minds of other men ;
Explore new regions—and behold the scenes
Which Nature, ever lavish and profuse,
Incessant offers to the wandering eye.
With knowledge fraught of other men and things,
Thou shalt return with better relish to enjoy
Thy own dear country !
Without more preface, then, I have resolved
That thou, for some short season, leave thy home,
To gain that last best polish
Which travel should bestow.

FERD. Most happy chance ! this hits the very mark
At which my arrow aimed ! Most gracious Sir,
It was my true intention to implore
Thy kind permission to enlist
In that brave armament, now setting forth
To quell the Corsairs who insult our flag,

And wage ferocious war 'gainst every people—
 Whom to subdue and humble were a triumph
 Worthy our country's fame and greatness.
 It shames me much that I, a soldier's son,
 Ne'er yet have drawn my sluggish sword.
 With gallant Camoens I will embark,
 And if the fates decree that I return,
 I will return more worthy of my father.

FRAN. Heyday ! If he is thus so very keen to go,
 Then wherefore should I send him ? *(Aside.)*
 With gallant Camoens embark, forsooth !
 The rogue, I do believe, will steal away
 And carry off my poem !
 Well, well—I will deliberately weigh
 Thy present scheme, since the intent is good—
 But if thou shouldst engage in angry fight,
 Remember that thou art my only son—
 'Tis prudence which should stamp the officer—
 Be wary and discreet, not seeking danger ;
 And let the crazy populace go first
 To stem the tide of battle—
 'Tis their vocation and just privilege—
 Those men to whom a lucky cannon ball
 Is the sure harbinger of fortune—
 Stand not between them and promotion.

FERD. My father, in this counsel to his son,
 Has done himself a notable injustice—
 I know that he has borne most honourable wounds.

FRAN. Yes ' yes ! my wounds were dearly bought,
But no impeachment of my prudence—
Hear how I gained those honourable scars.
As once I stood aloof, to watch with care
The progress of the battle, then begun,
Intending to come forth with fresher spirits,
To grace, by some decisive act, its close,
Some treacherous Moors, who lay in ambush near,
Sprung sudden from the thicket which concealed them ;
And, grim and black as devils in human form,
With brandished swords surrounded me.
I fought 'gainst desperate odds for life and limb ;
And but—but for the virtues of my horse,
This head, clean severed from the trunk, had graced
The walls of some accursed seraglio !

FERD. The time is scanty for our preparation—
I must in haste embark—but first I crave
A father's blessing on my head— (*Kneels.*)
And may the Heavens protect and bless
That father in my absence !

FRAN. Plague on this foolish mistiness
Which steals across my eyes—
I cannot see the boy ! (*Aside.*)

FERD. I must in haste away.

FRAN. How now ! thou must not hastily depart,
Thus bare and unprovided ;
The son of Lopez shall set forth
With all appointments suited to his rank—

I love the rich appurtenance of war !
The towering helm erect—the nodding plumes—
The ample buckler, curiously embossed—
The burnished corselet—and the golden spur—
With costly trappings—rare embroidery—
And all the proud caparison of Mars !
Come, come—I will expose my armoury,
And thou shalt choose a tried and trusty sword,
Will keep at bay the boldest infidels.

FERD. The fleet is ready, and a short delay
Will quite defeat our purpose.

FRAN. The fleet shall wait our pleasure—
Come, come—I will accoutre thee
In gallant fashion, and thy equipage
Shall to all eyes proclaim the son of Lopez.

[*Exeunt*.

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

The Apartment of Camoens.

FIDELIO, *writing.*

Enter to him PEEIREA and RODRIQUES.

FID. What is your business here?

PER. Where is the Signor Camoens?

FID. He is not here—he is abroad.

PER. Thy word shall not suffice—

We'll search and satisfy ourselves—

Where are his papers?

(They search.)

FID. Oh! how horribly they look!

(Aside.)

PER. Here are rich treasures, I suspect.

(Taking out papers.)

FID. Oh! do not touch those papers—

My master prizes them most dearly.

PER. And we shall prize them nothing less.

FID. They frighten me—what shall I say?

(Aside.)

Sirs, if ye knew how much our country's fame

Rests on those precious monuments of genius,

You would respect them.

ROD. A pretty monument indeed !

They'll burn, no doubt, and so may well their master—
He's lucky if he 'scape the flames.

FID. Oh ! murderous, unfeeling man ! *(Aside.)*

Sirs, though to you they are most worthless,
They constitute my master's sole possession,
Which cost him many an hour of weary toil,
When night brought sleep and rest to other men.

ROD. It had been better if his hand had hewn
Huge stones from the deep quarry.

FID. If ever you have felt or known
The charms of poetry, his verse
You would revere.

ROD. Curse on his jingling poetry !
It sets my teeth on edge, and jars my nerves
Worse than the scraping of an empty plate
When I am sickening with an empty stomach.

FID. I see him coming ! I'll away and stop him.
(Aside, going.)

ROD. Whither so fast, young gentleman ? *(Stops him.)*

PER. Stand aside ! our prey is running to the net.

Enter CAMOENS.

ROD. You are our prisoner.

CAM. What mean ye ?—whence is your authority ?

PER. We serve the Holy Office.

CAM. Shew your commission.

PER. To those entitled to demand it.

CAM. I do suspect some strange mistake.

PER. None, none—we are assured—

Thou must go with us hence.

CAM. I do respect the laws, and am prepared
To shew obedience even to their mistakes.

PER. There's no mistake.

FID. Oh ! do not go with them ——

It never yet was known that one who chanced
To pass the gate of that ill-omened place,
Came forth again uninjured.

Sirs, I do implore you—here I kneel. *(Kneels.)*

CAM. Kneel but to thy God, Fidelio—

Some little space, perchance, may be allowed
(To PERIERA.)

That I may give these poor effects of mine
To other custody.

PER. We hold them in safe custody.

CAM. My papers, if allowed, I would arrange,
And hastily dispose.

PER. They are attached, and must be lodged
In other hands.

CAM. I do submit me—

Come, Sirs, proceed, and I will follow you.

ROD. Not so—we go together, an' it please you.

FID. Oh ! do not—do not go—give some delay—

I will bring those who shall attest

His innocence.

ROD. Off! off! young master—

Come, Sir, we must away.

CAM. Farewell, Fidelio!

FID. Oh! cruel man, let me go with him—

He will require my service.

ROD. Off! off! I say.

CAM. Be gentle with the youth!

'Tis not a crime in him to love his only friend—

Farewell, kind boy! [*Exeunt, FIDELIO following.*]

SCENE II.

Apartment of Ignatio.

IGNATIO *solus.*

IGN. I wonder what detains Pereira thus!

His head shall suffer for the least neglect!

This victim long by me has been desired.

Those doctrines, falsely termed philosophy,

Which he audaciously propounds,

Corrupt the minds of men; and if allowed

A wider scope, would quickly undermine

The sacred fabric of our office—

But soft! what vision do I see!

Enter THEODORA

THEOD. Where is the holy father?

IGN. Thy will, fair daughter?

THEOD. Oh ! I have much to say—much to repent !

Much which it grieves and shames me to confess—

The paper which accused the noble Camoens

Was false, perfidious, and unjust.—

If it already have thy ear abused,

Let every trace indignantly be spurned

From thy most pure and virtuous thought—

And if a culprit must atone the deed,

As mine the guilt, be mine the punishment.

IGN. My eyes have ne'er beheld so fair a creature ! (*Aside.*)

THEOD. Oh ! speak some comfort—say you do forgive—

Say that no harm shall spring from my offence—

Oh ! quick relieve me from this agony !

IGN. Th' offence is grave, and may not be discharged

On circumstance so lightly grounded.

THEOD. Th' offence is mine ; and justice will decide

That I alone should suffer.

IGN. Be comforted, fair daughter—

Thou only didst corroborate the guilt,

Which we too long have known and suffered.

THEOD. Comfort ! what comfort do ye offer ?

The noble Camoens is innocent—

Much slandered and abused by one, who knows,

And dares assert his rectitude—

Guilt never yet had place in his unspotted mind !

IGN. Be pacified, fair daughter !

Enter PEREIRA.

IGN. Where is thy prisoner ? (*They speak apart.*)

PER. At hand, in custody—

Where wouldst thou have him lodged?

IGN. In that dark cell where late young Osmond died.

PER. And how bestowed?

IGN. In chains.

PER. It shall be done.

IGN. His papers?

PER. All, all secured and safe.

IGN. 'Tis well—bestow thy prisoner—

Begone! I will hear more at leisure.

[*Exit PEREIRA.*]

THEOD. That ruffian's countenance disturbs me,

And makes the blood run cold within me— (*Aside.*)

Would that his errand may not ought portend

Of mischief to the injured Camoens!

Say, father, that thou wilt be merciful.

IGN. This crime we will not hastily condemn;

Nor yet acquit 'gainst fact and circumstance,

Which strongly bend us to the harsher judgment—

All things we will dispassionately weigh,

With that cool wisdom which becomes our office.

THEOD. Oh! that the blood would rush through every vein,

And warm thy languid heart to feeling,

As now it mounts into my fevered brain—

Then wouldst thou know an hour of keen remorse

Is anguish past endurance.

IGN. 'Twere scarcely safe for thee, if my warm blood (*Aside.*)

Held still this desperate course

THEOD. Hast thou pronounced his pardon?

How sweet would be that sound!

If thou hadst ever known the sweet delight

Which glows within us when dispensing mercy,

Thou wouldst be merciful!

Thy God is merciful to all his creatures—

Mercy his noblest attribute!

'Tis sweet to wipe the tear of sorrow from the eye!

Oh, enviable privilege!

Who, that had sense to feel, would e'er forego

The exquisite delight!

IGN. Be calm, dear lady—

Too much of passion mixes in this suit—

We must proceed with just deliberation.

To-morrow shall decide the fate of Camoens—

Till then, exert a wholesome patience.

THEOD. To-morrow is a term we ne'er may reach!

Wilt tell the drowning wretch who sinks and dies,

The tide will ebb to-morrow?

Who dares with confidence pronounce

The sun will rise to-morrow?

No instant comes too soon for sacred justice;

Mercy delayed but robs the feeling heart

Of moments precious to humanity!

IGN. We cannot run the race of youthful passion—

Justice with steady hand must hold the balance,

To neither side inclining—

To-morrow we shall lend such favourable ear
As shall comport with our high function—
But now withdraw, for other cares of weight
Press heavily upon our time.

THEOD. Ha! Have I then sued in vain?

Glut thy insatiate pride, unfeeling man,
And see De Gama's daughter at thy feet.— (*kneels.*)
She stoops to ask, and will account a boon
That justice which 'twere impious to withhold.

IGN. Rise, noble lady—

This humble posture ill becomes thy state.

THEOD. Say, then, his pardon is pronounced—

Swear by this holy rood.

IGN. It may not be.

THEOD. It may not be! how say'st thou?

Has Theodora knelt in vain?

Now, by the blessed saints I swear,
This hour shall see the injured Camoens free,
Or on thy head a dreadful vengeance fall.
Thy blood, drained to the dregs, shall flow;
But ne'er atone one drop of that pure stream
Which warms the heart of Camoens—

Here is my hope!—here my sure refuge near!

(*Draws a dagger.*)

Hark! hark! I hear the distant groan—

I must be prompt—I feel the burning flame!

I fly to rescue thee, oh Camoens,

Or plunge into the ruin which unites us.

[*Exit* THEODORA.]

IGN. This fair and passionate seductress
Hath left my senses in disorder—
Her frantic threats we must not disregard ;
Nor yet from our own weakness lend them force,
To overrule our purpose—
I'll sift those papers, which I know contain
Most ample matter to approve our judgment.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment in Francisco's House.

Enter FRANCISCO and FERDINAND.

FERD. I do beseech thee, dearest father, that you use
Your utmost efforts to relieve
Th' imprisoned Camoens.

FRAN. The Holy Office has been strangely placed
Beyond our jurisdiction !
It were more fitting that the civil powers
Were all held subject and subordinate
Unto the power military—
Our discipline is suited to control
Those who the state direct, not less than those
Who stand in need of government.

FERD. Severe Ignatio is our cousin—
Thy word with him will more effect
Than a command from others.

FRAN. Aye, truly ; this our cousin, I suspect,
Would cheat thee of my fair estate.

FERD. And Camoens has ever been thy friend—
Thou canst not bear to see him suffer.

FRAN. I tell thee, Ferdinand, a moralist has said,
And truly said, as my experience tells,
There's something which enables us to bear
The worst misfortunes of our dearest friends
With wonderful philosophy !

FERD. This is a truth I would not seek to learn.
If Camoens, our country's pride, should fall,
The star of Lusitania sets for ever ;

FRAN. There thou art wrong again—
For Nature is prolific, just, and bountiful,
And will not leave the world in darkness.
If this star fall, another soon will rise.—
There never was a man so perfect formed,
In worth so far exceeding his compeers,
So fitted to direct th' affairs of man,
That this our world could not go on without him.
Were it not so arranged, whene'er he died,
As die he must, the world and its concerns
Would all run headlong to confusion.
Why, I myself must die (a fearful thought !)
And that high station, which I long have held,
Must fall to meaner hands.

FERD. Oh ! reason with the proud Ignatio,
Thy argument, perchance, will save my friend.

FRAN. How! reason with a priest? thou'rt mad, my boy!

Didst ever hear an answer given to the pulpit?

I can command, and well direct and point

The thundering artillery of reason;

But reason shot against authority,

Falls a blank cartridge.

FERD. Then Camoens must die—neglected perish!

The beauteous Theodora bade me say,

If thou wouldst save him from this peril,

She would be bound to thee for ever.

FRAN. What? “bound to me for ever?”

'Twill be a match then after all, I see! (Aside.)

This far exceeds my utmost hopes!

Well, I will try to rescue this our friend:

The enterprize is hard and perilous—

Ignatio basely covets my estate!

It is a haughty priest!—I love him not.

When yet a boy, he played the little tyrant!

His strength was great—he ever loved to fight

Much more than hit my fancy.—

I must be wary, shrewd, and circumspect,

For 'tis a delicate and ticklish office

To meddle with the hand which holds the rod.

We have a slippery rock to clamber up—

But come, my boy, and I will ponder well

How we may scale the castle of this giant,

To give thy friend his liberty. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

The Entrance to the Prison of the Inquisition.

Enter FIDELIO.

FID. I'll try once more to gain admittance. (*Knocks.*)

Enter RODRIQUES.

ROD. Who knocks? What, here again!

Why dost thou thus disturb this holy place?

FID. Oh! pardon me—I would again entreat
To see the Signor Camoens.

ROD. It cannot be—the doors are barred;
All access is forbidden.

FID. But I can do no harm—I am too young;
I wish but once again to see him.

ROD. It is impossible—perchance he undergoes
The question.

FID. What question—what is it they will do?

ROD. If he confess, the fire will purge his sins;
If he be obdurate, the rack must be applied
To force him to repentance.

FID. The rack! Oh, Heavens forbid!
Once more I do conjure thee—
Once more but let me see him ere he die.
Here is a ring—a jewel very rare:
Keep it—wear it—give me but admission—

(Gives the ring.)

ROD. Thou little urchin ! thou hast stolen it—

This ne'er was thine by any honest course.

FID. I swear 'tis justly mine—I scorn a theft—

A noble lady gave it.

Were gems more precious strewed before my feet,

And not my own, I would not stoop to reach them.

ROD. Well, well—'tis safer in my hands,

And I'll preserve it.

FID. But you will not deny my boon—

Hast thou a son ? I see thou hast—

I see it in thine eye—

A father ne'er was hard at heart.

ROD. Thou art a little crafty knave,

And hast too truly guessed my weakness.

Well, I will try to bring thee to thy master—

In this, great hazard I encounter,

And thou must be discreet and silent.

FID. As silent as the dead ;

The saints reward thee !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A Cell in the Prison of the Inquisition.

CAMOENS (in chains) rising from a Pallet.

CAM. Who calls ?—'tis strange that I should sleep so sound.

Thrice welcome sleep, sweet solace of the wretched !

It steals me from myself, and wafts my soul
 To realms of bliss ! How dark this cell !
 The glorious orb of day for me may rise no more !
 The free elastic air no more may breathe upon me,
 Imparting health and lightness to the spirits !
 The birds, which wing their giddy flight on high
 And live their little day, I envy !
 Why should the spirits sicken in confinement ?
 The mind is free, can range through boundless space,
 By walls and fetters unrestrained.
 Yet so it is—possessed of every good,
 But liberty denied, man lives unblessed !
 And nature freely, bounteously bestowed
 On all the precious gift of freedom ;
 But man, a guilty suicide, hath crushed
 The germ of his existence.
 This earth was all created fair—
 Fair to behold, and fruitful of all good ;
 But man, with sacriligious hand,
 Hath wantonly defaced the blameless work !

Enter RODRIQUES and FIDELIO.

FID. My dearest master ! (*Embraces.*)

CAM. My kind Fidelio !

ROD. I'll leave thee for some moments here,

And watch without. [*Exit RODRIQUES.*]

FID. Oh ! day of misery, of horror and despair !

CAM. Never distrust the just designs of Providence.

FID. This loathsome cell ! these cold dark passages !

The massy doors which creak and jar upon their hinges !

Those bolts and bars of adamant, which seem

To shut us from the living world !

CAM. These are the spectres which affright

The youthful fancy, or the mind enfeebled—

They hurt us not.

FID. Those hands were never made for chains !

CAM. These chains bring no dishonour—

'Tis guilt alone should shame us.

That Power which raised the Firmament !

At his least breath, these chains would fall—

FID. What if some dreadful punishment await thee !

CAM. It must be borne—

E'en death is not an evil to be feared,

For mortal man must die—

We must give place to others, or this earth,

O'ercharged, would swarm with self-destroying numbers !

FID. 'Tis hard to die so young !

CAM. This life, prolonged to weakness and fatuity,

Is a worse doom—the pains of age are great,

Its pleasures few—and life prolonged

Becomes a dreary solitude,

All kindly ties dissevered.

FID. Oh ! thinkst thou we shall meet in other worlds ?

CAM. The future state of man is not revealed ;

But we may well believe the good are happy—

That friends may meet again, and join the throng

Of angels !

Hast thou no wish, Fidelio,

To see the sages of antiquity ?

To hear the subtle Stagirite—

The moral Socrates—or Rome's great orator—

And Plato the divine ?

Wouldst thou not wish to meet those valiant men,

To whom thy country owes its high renown—

Its rank among the nations—

And that which far excels all martial fame,

Its conquest o'er the angry elements ?

FID. Oh ! think how to escape this danger—

My cloak will sure disguise thee.

CAM. Not so, Fidelio—

Think of the shame of a detected fraud.

FID. Thou surely wilt escape detection.

CAM. He bears the shame who bears

The consciousness of wrong.

FID. Oh ! this will make me mad—

Put on the gown, I do conjure thee—

(Takes off his scholar's gown and cap.)

Thy life is precious—me they will not harm—

Rodriques is merciful—

A little money will secure his friendship.

CAM. Thou dost forget thyself.

Who bribes an officer, corrupts,

And is corrupted.

FID. I must insist.—

(Offering the gown.)

Enter RODRIQUES.

ROD. How now, young gentleman !

Thou hast been here too long.

I see thy foolish artifice—

Thou art too young for mischief—

Come, come—we must away.

FID. Oh ! let him go, and let me stay behind.

ROD. Thou art perverse and foolish, boy—

Away, or I must force thee.

CAM. Farewell,

Obeys the officer—thou must submit.

FID. I swear I will not go.

ROD. I swear thou shalt, and speedily—

Come, foolish boy. *(Drags him off.)*

CAM. Be patient with him, friend—

He knows not to offend.

Farewell, Fidelio. *(Follows to the door.)*

SCENE VI.

Apartment of IGNATIO.

IGNATIO *reading Papers.*

Enter FRANCISCO.

FRAN. Good morrow, holy father !

IGN. Signor Francisco, salve !

FRAN. I come to sue thee for a special grace.

IGN. 'Tis granted, if it well become

Thy state and my true dignity.

FRAN. The life and liberty of Camoens.

IGN. Saint Dominic forbid !

A noted heretic !

FRAN. A noted heretic ?

Oh ! I abhor all heretics.

IGN. A false philosopher.

FRAN. Defend me from philosophers !

I hate them worse than Moorish infidels !

But he's a brave and worthy soldier—

We have a gallant armament on foot,

And I will send him forth to buy repentance

With forfeit of his life.

IGN. It cannot be—he is a citizen most mischievous.

FRAN. Why, let the mischief fall upon the enemy !

I'll deal with him as he deserves—

In the dark catalogue of death,

He'll fill a place as well as better men.

IGN. We lose the profit of example.

FRAN. It matters not—leave that to me—

I'll put him forth a mark

The Corsair cannot miss.

IGN. Thou dost but trifle with a grave offence.

FRAN. No, by my life—my wit is sober—

'Twas ever of a grave and serious cast.

Thou dost remember, when a boy

I was much given to grave and sober thought.

IGN. Beware ! I hold at hand some foolish lines,
Which stamp thee a notorious trifier.

FRAN. Now, by my faith I swear, the lines are good ! (*Aside.*)
The Muse's call, you know, must be obeyed—
Wit, if confined beneath a mountain's weight,
Will burst the ponderous mass of Caucasus,
And fly to heaven !

IGN. This trifling may, perchance, lop off
A limb of thy estate.

FRAN. How so, most holy father !
For all my paltry acres and estates,
I would not dare offend thee.

IGN. But for the blood of Lopez, which I own
In thy degenerate veins, those impious lines
Had sent thee to a fearful dungeon,
Companion to the worthless Camoens.

FRAN. I wish I were away ! (*Aside.*)
What put me on this office !
Father, forgive the grave offence.

IGN. Begone, and study to amend—
Some wholesome penance, at our better leisure,
Shall be imposed to wipe away the sin—
Till then, if thou appear abroad
To shame us with thy presence,
Expect the vengeance of the holy office.

[*Exit* IGNATIO.]

FRAN. Oh ! let me feel if I am safe—
That voice still hangs upon my ear,

And sinks into my inmost soul!
I think we have escaped this time unscathed,
Though tremours strangely seize me.
'Tis said the wind a shot engenders,
The bare percussion of the air
Hath made a hero fall!
Where then's the shame that we should tremble?
Though I to honours born and high estate,
And he base offspring of an unknown mother,
Yet was he still my dread in early youth—
I could not meet his steadfast eye;
And his stern look hath often damped
My bravest spirits.
Well, well, if I e'er meddle with this Cyclops,
If I again e'er plead a friend's distress,
At risk to make that friend's distress my own,
Then, good Ignatio, freely may you hurl
The thunderbolt against me. [Exit.

A C T V.

SCENE I

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter PASCAL and BIANCA.

BIAN. Go, Pascal, search the city round—

Find every doctor whom the walls encompass,
And bring the whole profession to the palace.

PASCAL. Art mad ? wouldst kill the garrison ?

I never yet, with my own will, did trust them—
They do but cobble, or put out of place
Those things which Nature has made excellent.

BIAN. Go, man, I say—thy dear young mistress,
'Tis thought, is at extremity.

PASCAL. I'd give my head to save her, dearest lady !

BIAN. I know thou wouldst ; but 'twill not serve the turn—
'Tis but a sorry head at best.

PASCAL. Whate'er it be, my good Bianca,
Thou once didst think far otherwise.
This head has made full many a heart ache,
And thine among the rest.

BIAN. I was a child, and loved thy comforts ;
But I must not forget my errand—
This letter must be sent to old Ignatio
With all convenient speed.

PASCAL. And wherefore, good Bianca ?

I like to know the reason of an order.

BIAN. What boots it thee to know the reason ?
They say our dear young lady did fall sick
For love of Camoens.

PASCAL. Ah ! I know it well !

Many who loved me in my youth
Were sorely pressed with this distemper !
But how will old Ignatio work the cure ?
'Twere wiser far to write to Camoens—
He's young, and trust me, an expert physician !

BIAN. Thou art a fool—he is a prisoner.

This letter from my Lord Antonio
Must be despatched to order his release.

PASCAL. How, Camoens a prisoner, and I not know it !

Who dared then place him in arrest ?
There's not a better soldier in our garrison.
You know, Bianca, I have been a soldier,
And though I love not to proclaim my feats,
A good one too, as many a wound can tell.
Now this brave youth, while fighting at my side,
I once saw kill some dozen infidels.

BIAN. And thou didst eat, I'll warrant me,
As many as ye killed between you—

But there's no time for trifling—
Bestir thyself, and bring some dozen doctors.
The letter, too, must be dispatched
With all expedient haste,
For good Antonio seems impatient of delay.

[*Exit* BIANCA.]

PASCAL. Well, well—it shall be done.
What ho ! Mendezibal ! Velasquez !
Ye lazy rogues—Haste, haste,
Thy sweet young mistress needs our zealous service.

Enter SERVANT.

PASCAL. Take thou this letter to my Lord Francisco—
And say it is to order the release
Of Signor Camoens—it will not bide delay—
Away, and bring him with thee—
His presence here is wanted in all haste.

SERV. I'll go as you desire. [*Exit* SERVANT.]

PASCAL. My poor young fellow-soldier !
I'll catch a shoal of doctors first ;
And then, if that old foolish commandant
Refuse to grant thee full enlargement,
I will myself assist to break thy prison.
This the best service I can rende
To my own dear young lady. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Francisco's House.

FRANCISCO *solus*.

This cankers and corrodes my spirits,
And must, perforce, bring on some malady !
I dare not brave Ignatio !
But I will try what money can effect,
For 'tis most monstrous that an officer
Of high command should linger here in durance,
And at the will of an encroaching monk,
Whose youth was nurtured by my father's bounty !

Enter SERVANT.

SERV. Thy son, my young Lord Ferdinand,
Attends without, and craves admittance.

FRAN. Say I am sick, and cannot see him—
That matters of great weight engage me.

SERV. I will convey as much. *[Exit SERVANT.]*

FRAN. He knows that I have tried in vain
To move Ignatio's stubborn will ;
That Camoens must be condemned
To undergo the rack, or in the flames
To purify his mighty spirit—
A notable lustration, truly !
I wonder why the villain Gomez
Should loiter thus ! who waits without ?

Enter GOMEZ.

FRAN. Hast thou conveyed my letter ?

GOMEZ. The lady Theodore is ill,
And could not be disturbed.

FRAN. Where is the letter then ?

GOMEZ. I gave it to my Lord Antonio.

FRAN. Thou most incorrigible !
And how did he bestow it ?

GOMEZ. He broke the seal, observing that it might contain
Some news of Signor Camoens.

FRAN. Thou worthless knave ! what said he ?

GOMEZ. He seemed to start and marvel at the reading,
As one who just had seen a ghost !

FRAN. Oh ! thou most pitiful of slaves !
Did he restore the letter ?

GOMEZ. No—no—he tore it in a thousand pieces,
And bade me say, his daughter should not wed
With rampant age, which forfeits its own dignity
In mimicking the foolery of youth !

FRAN. Most insolent ! away, thou slave ! [*Exit GOMEZ.*
This insult cannot, must not be endured.

Enter SERVANT.

FRAN. How now !

SERV. A letter from my Lord Antonio,
Which he commends to thy most urgent heed.

[*Exit SERVANT.*

FRAN. What, what !—an answer, or a challenge ?

I'll know the worst ! *(Opens the letter.)*

Well, well—I see that all is safe.

This is some blunder of the officer—

The letter is addressed to old Ignatio ;

But I've been taught by his example

To wave all ceremony—

Shall I despatch this order to the priest ?

'Tis peremptory ; but I greatly err

If he do yield obedience——

But if he should, why then my own offence,

Which shews but lightly in the scale,

Must needs escape all further visitation.

I'll send the letter in all haste——

Why, how now ! who comes here,

So little in the mood of ceremony ?

Enter PEREIRA.

PER. Father Ignatio sends his benediction.

FRAN. My good Pereira,

This is an unexpected visit—

How fares our holy father ?

How is our gracious cousin ?

His health, I hope, as we would wish ?

PER. His health is good ; but he is vexed in spirit.

FRAN. Oh ! say not so—it grieves me sorely—

Some cursed mischief, I foresee ! *(Aside.)*

PER. He grieves to see his own dear blood rebellious—

He grieves to find that he must use the rod
To chasten those he loves.

FRAN. Plague on such courtesy ! (*Aside.*)

PER. To snatch thee from thy dangerous state,
He hath ordained that thou do give in alms
Piastras twice five hundred to the poor.

FRAN. A thousand good piastras !
Why, man, I shall be ruined !
The poor, I say, are well, content, and happy,
As all philosophers agree—besides,
I give my mite as well as other men.

PER. Thou must give more to have their special prayer
In this thy great offending.

FRAN. Well, this is all, thou sayst ; I'll think of it.

PER. One thousand more our college shall require
To furnish forth some meet repair.

FRAN. Curse on thy college !
What boots it me if its dark mouldering walls
Were toppled down to-morrow !

PER. This answer shall I then report ?

FRAN. Nay, good Pereira, be not over hasty—
I will consider well the matter.

I now am vexed—my humour is irascible.

PER. One thousand more for masses for thy soul.

FRAN. Zounds, man, my soul is in its own right place !
Keep those thy masses till I give it up :
'Twill then be time enough to think
Of paying for such passports.

PER. Thy case is desperate, I see.

No sign of true repentance !

One thousand more to save the soul of Camoens.

FRAN. The soul of Camoens ! Why, flesh and blood,

I say the man must save himself—

Must I become for souls the universal chapman ?

PER. Thou hast seduced him from the paths of truth :

'Tis fit thou pay for his return.

FRAN. I seduce him, truly—I was his scholar :

From him I learnt the art poetical !

PER. But he is poor withal, and cannot pay.

FRAN. This is a most notorious fallacy—

Our laws declare that he, who with his *purse*

His debt cannot atone, must pay it with his *person*.

PER. 'Twas so of old, but we reformed the rule,

And now we judge it better that he pay with both—

Thy friend endures the question.

FRAN. How, Camoens condemned to bear the rack !

This makes the marrow creep within my bones !

Poor Camoens, I pity thee !

How did he bear the torture ?

PER. Most like a Christian and a man—

Like one who knows that castigation here

Will purchase ease hereafter.

FRAN. Oh ! I would rather wait and take my chance !

PER. What answer shall I bear ?

FRAN. 'Tis ruin—ruin—past recovery !

I am not rich—speak thou in my behalf—

I tell thee, good Pereira, 'tis unjust—
Say, I will give the half.

PER. In all four thousand true piastres,
Of weight and purity assured,
With something for my pains.

FRAN. Oh ! oh ! such pains I could dispense with !
Here for thyself. *(Gives a purse.)*
Tell my good cousin I will do my utmost
To give him satisfaction.

PER. I will assure him of thy duty. *[Exit PEREIRA.]*

FRAN. Confound the whole fraternity !

Re-enter PEREIRA.

PER. One thing I did forget—some cordials from thy cellar
Are needful to our sick.
Our patients on the wheel shall crave
Some potent cordial to sustain their spirits.

FRAN. No doubt—no doubt—I'll think of it. *[Exit PEREIRA.]*
These locusts will devour me !
The dainty rogues must quaff my oldest wine
To give them meekness and humility—
Now, if the state would own the mighty service,
I'd poison all the breed ; nor leave behind
One cloistered rat alive.
Four thousand true piastres !
Oh, monstrous stretch of tyranny and fraud !
What makes man bear this rank oppression ?
Cheated and plundered by a priest !
Crossed in my love ! ashamed to find myself a dupe !

My son—my only hope—staff of my age—
I ne'er may see again !
This world was made not for the wise and honest !
Bold knaves still prosper, and push out the good !
The strong oppress the weak ! Why, what a world is this !
And what a wretch am I !
I'll straight go hang myself. [Exit.

SCENE III

An Apartment in the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERD. My father sick, or ill at ease, and wanting power
To serve us in this great emergence !
I fear some dread catastrophe !

Enter CLARA.

FERD. What news of Theodora ?

CLARA. Let thy imagination paint the worst,
And it will not outstrip the sad reality.

FERD. Is she not more composed ?

CLARA. The fever rages in the brain,
And has put on all forms of frantic woe.
Some intervals of short repose have soothed
The angry malady, or else, 'tis feared,
Nature ere this had sunk exhausted.

FERD. The blessed saints protect and save her !
How do her parents, in this fearful hour,
Support the keen affliction ?

CLARA. Oh, it harrows up my soul to think of them.

The good Ambrosia kneeling at her couch,
Bathing with silent tears her burning hand,
Raising her piteous eyes to Heaven for mercy,
I cannot look upon her misery !
Antonio, too, that venerable man,
Runs wild and furious through the palace,
Tearing his silver locks—upbraiding every saint !
No words can tell his desolation !

FERD. Oh, bitter anguish !—can no hope be found ?

CLARA. E'en now, Antonio, by his guards attended,
Hath issued forth on some wild enterprize—
'Tis thought he will by force release
Th' imprisoned Camoens, whose hapless fate,
It is believed, has preyed upon her mind,
And caused this wild distraction.

FERD. The heavens prosper the attempt !

But yet I dread the stern Ignatio—
His heart is obdurate—his will perverse.
He will not bend to violence.

CLARA. Though brave De Gama's blood run gently on,
Unruffled, when no wrongs insult his meekness,
Yet roused, it swells and warms a lion's heart ;
And when inflamed, he can exert a force
Which spurns all opposition.
It is decided that, if Theodore
Escape impending death, her hand and fortune,
To gallant Camoens consigned,

Shall recompence his sufferings—
Ambrosia will no longer interpose
To cross her daughter's inclinations.

FERD. 'Tis just it should be so, though mine the sacrifice!

Does her physician countenance the hope,
That seeing Camoens, her reason will return?

CLARA. It seems yet doubtful—

His name she seldom utters,
And then 'tis agony and mad despair!
Once with a sudden start and desperate bound,
She flew from her surprised attendants,
And with a strength surpassing human force,
Mocked all restraint, and would have fled the palace—
The conflict o'er, she fell a lifeless form
In good Antonio's arms.

FERD. Oh! what a trial for a father!

Say, gentle Clara, has my hateful name
E'er passed the lips of our distracted Theodore?

CLARA. She rails at all in turn; and in her rage

Thy name has been remembered—
I know thee true and loyal, Ferdinand,
But she upbraids thee with a secret treason.

FERD. It is most true—thou seest a wretched man—

Lost for a smile—a glimmering hope of bliss!
Disloyal to his friend, and lost for ever!

CLARA. I never will believe it—

Thou hast approved thyself of spotless honour!
Could I thy faith but for an instant doubt,

No word of Theodora's frantic raving
 Had e'er escaped me——
 'Twas nothing more than incoherent sounds,
 Which sprung from a disordered fancy.

FERD. Thy charity would plead where justice must be silent——

This scene will pass away !

The day must close, and welcome cheerless night !

CLARA. It is unmanly to despair——

Thy services are wanted.

Just Heaven may yet avert this misery,

And change to smiles our present tears.

Oh ! Ferdinand, absorbed in our own grief,

We little think what others suffer !

But stay—where will my folly lead me ! (*Aside.*)

Come with me, for our watchful cares

Must all be used to save th' unhappy sufferers !

Too long the precious moments we have wasted.

FERD. I follow thee—but bear a weight of sadness,

Which bends me to the earth. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Ignatio's Apartment.

IGNATIO *solus* (*reading a Letter.*)

IGN. This partly staggers my resolve :

The proof is slight—th' offence not grave——

His friends are many—and his merit known !

His death would rouse the public voice,
And generate perchance some peril—
Shall I release him on conditions ?
Or give him liberty with such free grace
As shall for ever fix a friend ?
But then the heresy is dangerous,
And may not thus be winked at—
I will pursue the middle course of safety—
His death shall be announced ; and if it stir
No threatening storm, why then he safely dies—
And if it rouse the warring elements,
He is at hand, and may compose the tempest !
What ho ! Pereira !

Enter PEREIRA.

PER. Thy pleasure ?

IGN. How fares thy prisoner ?

PER. Right well, I think, in health and spirits.

IGN. And how demeans himself ?

PER. Most nobly—meek patience seems to vie
With manly fortitude.

IGN. Hath he confessed ?

PER. Nothing as yet, I think.

IGN. Didst shew the rack ?

PER. I did, as you had ordered.

IGN. How seemed he ?

PER. Undaunted !—

I never yet beheld a stouter heart—
He viewed each part with eye inquisitive,

As he would measure with an enemy :
 And though some drops o'erspread his manly brow,
 He yet did smile—and those his smiles appeared
 Like sunbeams playing in a shower !
 I do believe, had he a dozen limbs,
 And every sinew stretched and vibrating,
 We should not discompose a feature.

IGN. Well, well ! it should be ever thus—

What says Francisco ?

PER. I left him in a state of hopefulness—

The crucible is skilfully prepared —

He fumes and melts already—

More gold I will extract before he cools,

Than e'er the art of alchymy brought forth.

IGN. 'Tis well—thou hast done well.

PER. What further order shall I take ?

IGN. If any should enquire for Camoens,

Say he is dead.

PER. 'Tis near the truth, since surely he is buried.

IGN. Say that he died of grief—of terror—or despair—

That, with a frantic hand, he worked

His own destruction.

PER. 'Twill not be difficult to gain belief,

For this we all have known before.

IGN. Go, then, unto thy post. [*Exit PEREIRA.*]

IGNATIO *solus.*

IGN. This heavenly vision haunts me in my dreams !

I marvel that she comes not !

I would once more just look upon that countenance.
'Tis long since I have felt the magic power
Of female loveliness, for time has chilled
The current in my veins ; but yet there's something
In the fresh atmosphere of glowing youth,
Breathing all sweetness, which instils new life—
The fragrant rose, but newly gathered
In all its freshness, thus revives and charms
The languid sense—'tis sweet and healthful !

(*Noise without.*)

What rude disturbance there ?

Enter PEREIRA.

PER. The Viceroy, attended by his guard,
Would force the gate.

IGN. Give him admittance—
What means this stormy visit ?

[*DON ANTONIO without.*

ANT. Dead, say ye ! base slave, thou liest !

Enter ANTONIO with Guards

ANT. I say he shall not die.
The wretch who dares but frown upon him,
Shall feel the vengeance of De Gama's sword.

IGN. Who dares insult this sanctuary ?

ANT. I dare insult the place and thee—
I know thee well, Ignatio !

Give me the injured Camoens—

His life I hold more dear than all the tribe of saints
That swell thy calendar.

IGN. This boldness long will not be borne.

ANT. Bear it thou shalt—release thy prisoner :

If dead, his death was foul, and thou shalt answer it.
Produce the body.

IGN. This insolence is past endurance.

ANT. Call up my guards—beat down the walls—

I will expose the base atrocious murder,
And will avenge it !

IGN. Be temperate, old man ;

Take heed how thou advance—
The place is sacred, and a power supreme
Defends it from thy violence.

ANT. Ha ! tell a grieved father to be temperate !

Command the bellowing winds ! bid the vexed ocean
Quick compose itself !
Thou ne'er hast felt the yearnings of a father !
Inhuman man ! thou hast not—
Else hadst thou never plunged thy dagger
In my loved Theodora's breast.

IGN. In Theodora's breast !

I am amazed—the saints protect her !
He lives : no hair of Camoens is touched !

ANT. Say but that word again ! Say it again !

Nay, do not mock my weakness ;
Thou hast not seen De Gama weep before—

These tears are for my child—

Say that he lives, and I will worship thee.

IGN. Though justly for his great offence condemned,

He lives; and if sufficient guaranty be given

To guard against relapse, and future sin,

His liberty shall be restored.

ANT. Quick, quick, deliver him—

I pledge the honour of De Gama's name,

Which never bore a stain.

IGN. 'Tis well—our prudence shall direct

What further steps should be pursued

To warrant his enlargement.

ANT. Be prompt! the fever rages in her brain,

And will not bear delay.

IGN. I will such haste employ as shall comport

With just discretion—

Immediate order shall be given

For his release—Proceed.

ANT. I follow thee as lightsome as the air of spring.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E V.

The Apartment of Camoens.

FIDELIO *solus.*

FID. I've prayed to every saint, in vain!

I've carried offerings to the holy altar!

I've given all I have—but no relief!
 Where shall I go? what shall I do?
 This little cross which my poor master gave me,
 Is all I've left—and that I cannot part with!
 He pitied me—was ever kind and good;
 But who will now protect a friendless boy?
 They've carried every thing away,
 And tell me I must seek some other shelter—
 All, all alone, and friendless!
 Where can I go? few love to see the wretched!
 I'd go and throw myself into the sea;
 But that we know is wicked—
 Some say 'tis cowardly to kill oneself—
 That cannot be, for I do feel
 It needs a world of courage thus to die—
 But I must die, if none will succour me—
 'Tis best to die in peace, and then we're happy

ANTONIO without.

ANT. Come on, brave Camoens—

I'll land thee safe in harbour!

FID. What do I see! Oh, Heavens! my master!

Enter ANTONIO and CAMOENS.

CAM. My good Fidelio!

FID. Oh! say that thou art safe—

What angel rescued thee?

CAM. I told thee never to distrust

The ways of Providence.

FID. Hast thou sustained no injury ?

CAM. None—none.

FID. The saints be praised !

I see they heard my prayer, tho' I believed it not.

ANT. Well, as I said, my worthy Camoens,

Thou shalt espouse my daughter in all haste ;

And with her I will freely give

A portion worthy of De Gama—

To tell thee true, it ever was my wish

That Theodora should reward thy merit ;

But we must sometimes yield to circumstance.

CAM. This were a destiny, far far beyond

My most aspiring hopes—

I dare not yet indulge so sweet a dream !

'Twere happiness enough to find

The lovely Theodore restored

To health and peace.

ANT. We now have nothing more to fear—

Thy presence will restore her—

I know these maidens well—

And in my day I could have cured

A score of damsels labouring with such sickness.

But I must hasten with the joyful tidings !

The day is nearly spent, and night comes on—

I will expect thee at the palace—

Remember that to fail—one moment fail,

In an appointment made by love,

Were treason to thy mistress.

Farewell, for some short hour—

We'll meet again anon.

[*Exit* ANTONIO.

CAM. Gracious Antonio, I will follow thee—

FID. This is, indeed, a joyful hour !

I never thought to see thee more !

CAM. I have been mercifully spared !

How hast thou fared, my good Fidelio ?

FID. Indifferent well ; but they have plundered thee of all.

CAM. What, have they carried off my poor effects ?

FID. They were resolved, they said, with fire to burn

The goods of such a heretic.

CAM. We must submit to strong necessity—

These are but sorry trappings for a bridegroom !

They will bespeak more haste than ceremony—

We must contrive to mend our shattered sails,

As time and circumstance permit,

And hasten to the palace.

The meanest ship, when safely moored in port,

Is worth a thousand gallant vessels foundering !

Thou shalt assist, Fidelio, in the work,

And Theodora's smiles will best reward thee.

FID. Oh ! gladly will I give my service—

And I again will pray the saints

To bless thee and thy happy bride.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

The Vestibule of the Viceroy's Palace.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERD. Ill try to catch the passing sounds—

This night, 'tis said, her fate must be decided—

This night ! a few short hours hence !

'Tis fearful thus to stand upon the brink,

And see beneath a boundless void,

A dread eternity !

Yon silver crescent scarce has swelled its horns

Since she appeared in perfect loveliness—

Possessed of all which gives to life its charm—

Friends, fortune, rank, the grace of youth—

The buoyant spirit born of jocund health !

High seated on that lofty eminence,

The lowering clouds of winter seemed to roll

Beneath her feet, their fury spending harmless !

This brilliant meteor then must pass away ;

Nor leave a trace behind—all human hopes

Thus gleam a momentary light,

And sink in endless darkness !

Yes ! to this end we all advance, unconscious !

I must not think of it !—

Ere this I had expected Camoens,

And wonder that he comes not—

I will confess my underservings—

The injury he suffered at my hands—
 The brave—the good are ready to forgive ;
 But 'tis more difficult to earn
 Our own forgiveness !

Enter CLARA.

CLARA She sleeps !

And all our hopes revive—
 Angelic smiles, which Heaven itself imprints,
 Play on her lovely countenance—
 Her looks are all serene as sleeping innocence !
 This change is more than we dared hope—
 Ambrosia has retired, o'ercome with care—
 I have persuaded her to leave her charge,
 And seek some short repose—
 The good Antonio, too, with hope elate,
 Has left his post, at my entreaty.
 Watch thou the doors—
 If Camoens come, he must not be admitted ;
 She must not be disturbed ;
 To-morrow may confirm our hopes,
 And prove auspicious to his wishes.
 I will go hence to give some necessary charge,
 And quick return. I would, too, lull the fears
 Which still may agitate a mother's bosom.
 Keep thou the guard the while, that no rude noise
 May chance to break her slumbers. [*Exit CLARA.*]

FERD. Oh ! may those placid slumbers prove
 Sure harbingers of health and peace !

May reason soon in that distempered mind
Resume her wonted seat !

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. My lord, your noble father
Would see you in all haste—
He would embrace his gallant son
For the last time.

FERD. Ha ! What sayest thou !
My father at extremity !

Enter second SERVANT.

2d SERVANT. My gracious master sends his last blessing,
His earnest prayer for his dear son ;
And did commission me withal
To give this good and trusty sword,
Which Ferdinand shall use against the Infidel,
(For so he did express himself,)
To seal his father's peace in heaven.

FERD. 'Tis aptly come, and shall be used
To sever soon a worthless thread.
My father lost !—my only parent gone !
Last of his race.
Oh, had I known a mother !
Fate ! what more ?—Thou hast exhausted now
The fount of human ill !
Ha ! what do I see ! the suffering Theodora, all dis-
hevelled !

Enter THEODORA, with a dagger in her hand.

BIANCA, *following.*

THEOD. Come down from heaven, ye vengeful fires!

Are ye endued with sense of human wrong?

With quick perception of the guilt concealed?

Then dart your angry shafts!

Strike, strike the guilty Theodore—

Here undismayed she stands—

Strike, strike th' avenging blow!

FERD. Unhappy Theodora! More wretched Ferdinand!

BIAN. Speak softly, lest you rouse her!

Return, dear mistress—

Night breathes its noxious vapours,

Which may not thus be braved.

FERD. Return, most gracious lady.

THEOD. Who speaks?—Who calls on Theodora?

Who dares profane the place?

What bold intruder thus insults our presence?

Avaunt, presumptuous man!

FERD. We must not leave her thus—

Retire, retire, dear lady.

THEOD. Who art thou?—Slave, take off thy hands—

Dost thou not see I am a bride—

Dost thou not see this spotless robe?

Where is my husband?

Oh! Camoens!

BIAN. She will again be desperate—

Thou must beware—

Take, take the dagger from her.

FERD. Let me conduct thee hence—

THEOD. Stand off!

Who dares insult the wife of Camoens!

He shall protect her honour!

Who art thou?—speak!

FERD. Thou seest the wretched Ferdinand—

Oh! do not look upon me thus.

THEOD. Ha! Ferdinand!

Thou hast recalled a name!

It brings some dreadful recollections!

'Twas he who basely did betray my husband!

Go, wretched man! bring back the murdered Camoens!

Go, make thy peace. *(She stabs him.)*

BIAN. Oh! help!

FERD. I bless the hand that gave the wound!

Thou hast redeemed me from a deadly sin,

Or mortal suffering!

Farewell beloved, unhappy Theodora!

Guard her, ye pitying angels! *(Dies.)*

THEOD. Where am I?

What have I done?

I have some strange impression of a dream—

A fearful dream of death!

Young Ferdinand, who loved me!

Dead—dead—and by this desperate hand!

Enter CLARA.

CLARA. Oh, horror, past all human woe!

Dear murdered Ferdinand!

THEOD. Support me, good Bianca, ere I faint !

My strength is ebbing fast.

Ah, dearest, kindest Clara !

This dagger, too, has pierced thy bleeding heart !

My friend !—my sister !—Oh, forgive me !

Console my honoured father—

Speak comfort to Ambrosia.

I leave thee, dearest Clara—

Pray for my soul !—'Twas madness gave the wound !

The Heavens are merciful, and will forgive.

I faint—my eyes are dim—what spectres flit before me !

I die !—Farewell !—Oh, Camoens ! *(Dies.)*

Enter CAMOENS.

CLARA. She swoons—she's gone ! Support me, Heaven !

Help—haste—help—help—whoe'er thou art !

CAM. What spectacle is here !

Young Ferdinand, my friend !

Fallen by his own hand !

Oh, rash, unfortunate young man !

My Theodora !—Just God of Mercy !

What am I doomed to suffer !

Enter ANTONIO with Attendants.

ANT. What noise was that ?

CLARA. Farewell, my Theodore—

Cold, cold, and lifeless—

She's gone for ever from us !

ANT. Who dares now say she's gone !

My darling Theodore !—My child !

Who murdered thee ?

Who says she's dead—she shall not die !

CAM. This agony 'tis not in man to bear !

Oh, Theodora ;—My only love !

I follow thee ! *(Draws his sword.)*

CLARA. Stay thy coward hand, unthinking man !

Wilt thou desert us in our misery !

ANT. Give me the sword—

Why dost thou hesitate ?

I'll make more manly use of it—

I'll follow Theodora.—She is my child !

CAM. This must be borne, tho' it hath rent

The very chord which bound me to existence !

And left me desolate ! *(Throws away the sword)*

Thou childless, wretched, good old man !

What comfort can I speak to thee ?

Thou art beyond the reach of consolation.

ANT. Give me the sword, I say—

He is a coward, and afraid to strike—

Unhand me, ruffians !

Were now this arm as it was wont to be !

I will avenge my Theodora !

CLARA. Oh, support thy courage, kind De Gama !

Thy daughter sues—thy Clara now implores thee.

ANT. My daughter, say ye !—Where is she ?

I'd give the universe for one sweet look.

Inhuman slaves, restore her to my arms,
Or let me follow her.

CAM. Bear off the bodies from his sight—

They stir up madness in his brain !

ANT. We will not part—no—never, never—

I've lived too long, my Theodora !

Thy grave shall be my home !

Yes—yes—my child ! thou'rt gone—for ever gone !

How couldst thou leave thy wretched father thus ?

But see, he follows thee, he comes, my child.

(Throws himself on the body.)

CAM. Thou sad unfortunate old man,

I'll be the son of thy affliction !

Extend thy all-protecting arm,

O ! Thou, whose awful judgment bows us to the dust !

Stretch forth thy hand to raise us !

O ! let thy spirit elevate my soul ;

And in the effort to support and soothe

A wretched father's grief, I'll hope to find

The strength and fortitude to bear my own.

[Exeunt omnes.]

THE END.





